A Comparative Study of Teachers' and Secondary level Pupils' Perceptions of, and Responses to Conflict in England and Denmark

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Abstract

This study examined the perceptions of and responses to conflict of pupils and teachers in secondary schools in England and Denmark. It also examined the responses of schools to pupil conflicts and whether pupils and teachers found these measures to be effective in addressing and/or managing such conflicts. The inquiry into perceptions and responses involved questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and documentary data collection instruments. There were a total of 347 pupil respondents (approximately 11-16 years old) and 34 teacher respondents across four schools.

The results yielded significant perceptual differences both within the individual countries and cross-culturally. In the two English schools there were significant differences amongst pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict. There were also significant differences amongst pupil perceptions and responses to conflict cross-culturally. More English pupils defined conflict and identified pupil conflicts in their schools as fighting, while the majority of Danish pupils both defined and identified pupil conflicts as verbal. However, for the most part there was more consistency in responses amongst pupils and teachers in Denmark than in England.

Cultural and educational differences could be two contributing factors that played a role in the differences in perceptions of, and responses to, conflict amongst respondents in England and Denmark. For example, the Danish system administers a class teacher system where the class teacher not only spends several years with the same pupils but also takes on the role of pastoral carer. Moreover, it was found that while all four schools in this study had anti-bullying policies, none had policies pertaining specifically to the management of conflict. This was potentially an area of concern as pupils described conflicts that were beyond the scope of bullying.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will start with an explanation of the motivation behind this research, along with a reflective summary of the researcher's biographical profile. The objectives of the research will then be presented, followed by the discussion of the rationale for choosing the countries of focus for this study – England and Denmark. This is then followed by the research questions. Finally, an outline of the thesis will introduce the structure of this study and the aims of each chapter. These sections aim to provide a brief understanding of the purpose of this study.

1.1 Motivation and reflective summary of researcher's biographical profile

Conflict is a much discussed topic in many societies, including in Denmark, where I grew up. Two factors contributed to the motivation behind this study. One had to do with my personal views on conflict and its management. As a member of the Baha'i faith, I was taught about the value of unity; that in order for people to live more harmoniously, we need to create a peaceful society. According to Baha'i writings, what stands in the way of this unity is unresolved or mismanaged conflict.

As a Baha'i, I also believe that our schooling contributes significantly to our development and that although conflicts are bound to happen during this period, if pupils are not taught to manage or resolve them effectively, unresolved or unmanaged conflicts can lead to poor quality or unfulfilling relationships. Therefore, in order to prevent such relationships from arising and in order to better understand and manage pupil conflicts, appropriate management tools are needed.

My Baha'i beliefs and teachings, along with my own experiences of conflict and media attention on violent and extreme conflicts in schools, sparked my interest in examining pupils' and teachers' perceptions of and responses to conflict.

I am an Iranian Baha'i. I was born in the 80's during a very tumultuous time in Iran. The Islamic Revolution had started. During this time there was a lot of religious persecution towards the Baha'is. The Baha'i faith was seen by the Ayatollahs as a threat to the stability of Islam in Iran. So in order to prevent the spread of it, the mullahs imprisoned Baha'is and forced them to convert to Islam. The Baha'is who did not convert, were persecuted. My father was one of the people persecuted. He was imprisoned and tortured and told that if he did not convert to Islam he would die. My father refused to convert to Islam as he was a devout Baha'i. Unfortunately, my father was martyred for his beliefs.

Ironically, the main principles of the Baha'i faith are unity in diversity and the elimination of prejudice. More specifically, as Baha'is, we believe that all prejudice, whether that be religious, racial, cultural, national or economical is destructive and must be overcome, yet Baha'is were being killed by their own people (Iranians) for adhering to a different religion. Other principles of the faith include, but are not limited to: equality of men and women, independent investigation of truth, there is one God and humanity is one family. When I was younger I also went to Baha'i school where I learned more about the Baha'i faith as well as conflicts and ways to resolve them. The major way that we as Baha'is resolve conflicts is through consultation. We believe that speaking about your issues with the person or people that you are having the issue/s with is the best way of resolving them. This is done is a peaceful way, with respect for one another and by listening to one another.

After my father's execution, my mother, my two older brothers and I left Iran and went to Denmark. Here I was at the age of three, in a new country not knowing the language or the people. Over time I made friends and started to excel at Danish. I then started Kindergarten (primary school), of which I have some of my fondest memories. I got on with all the pupils and the teachers. We were like a big family, with the older pupils watching out for the younger ones. I moved on to *folkeskole* (which starts in year 5), equivalent to secondary school in the UK. In the first *folkeskole* I attended I got bullied everyday by a group of young Danish girls. I mainly got bullied for having a pink bike (it was obvious that the bike had been painted pink). But I also got bullied for looking different, having dark hair and dark eyes, and was often told to go back home, and on a few occasions I was hit by some pupils in my class. The bullying got so

unbearable that I would come home in tears almost every day, and every day came up with different excuses for not wanting to go to school. When my mother found out about the bullying, she stormed to the school, complained and switched me to another school that was closer to home.

Although I also biked there on a daily basis on the same pink bike, I was not bullied any more. In fact I really liked my class. I remember it being a mixture of cultures and genders and my two class teachers were the most kind and friendly teachers ever. We were truly like a little family.

At the age of 11, in grade 6, I was the top student in my English class and my teachers told my mother that I was too advanced for the class. My mother's solution was an exchange year in an English speaking country. We chose Canada as it had an International Baha'i school; what was supposed to be one year turned into all of high school. After that it was only logical for me to remain in Canada to pursue further education. I took a BA in psychology as I had always been fascinated by people and the logic behind their actions. After that I decided that I was interested in pupil development and that my next degree would be a combination of psychology and education, so I did a MEd in Educational Psychology. Finally I decided that I wanted to take this one step further and explore the conflicts that pupils are experiencing in secondary schools today, to see whether they are similar to the experiences that I went through.

My experiences of racist bullying made me very sad. I thought that all Danish pupils felt that way until I changed schools, when I realized that it was just some people who are mean no matter where you go. It was a hard time for me and as a result I struggled to trust people. I remained very isolated and started to think that there was something wrong with me, that I was at fault and that I deserved what had happened to me. There was no counselling service available at the school, which made the instances more unbearable. It was hard for me to believe that people could be so mean to one another, especially when I was brought up to respect all people and to try to create unity where there was none. My approach to bullying was always to try to find out why they were doing what they were doing.

As a result of the conflicts that I was faced with when growing up, I started to believe that bullying was normal part of growing up and that all people who were a bit different, perhaps weaker, smaller, or slower - would go through this at some point in their lives. However on reading the literature, including that about extreme cases of conflicts in schools (such as school shootings and stabbings) I started to wonder whether bullying really was the main conflict that pupils go through as part of growing up, or whether it was just one aspect of many different conflicts that pupils undergo under the umbrella concept of "conflict". Ultimately, this led me to undertake the research reported in this thesis.

1.2 Rationale for the study

An initial review of the literature encouraged me to examine school-based conflict. The results, however, revealed very little research into the perceptions of, and responses to, conflict in secondary schools. In fact, the literature on school conflict focused mainly on external conflict, predominantly bullying (Sharp & Smith, 1991; Rigby & Slee, 1993; Smith & Brain, 2000, Smith & Sharp, 1994; Foster, Arora & Thomson, 1990; Olweus, 1993). As yet, there have been no significant studies into other types of pupil conflict in secondary schools. For me, this lack of research was a matter of concern because pupils may be experiencing other types of conflict that are going on unnoticed. It is also worrying because it suggests that conflict may be defined in terms of adult concerns i.e. "bullying" and raises the question of whether pupils are viewed as active participants in matters concerning them.

Moreover, some research has suggested that there is a lack of objective investigation into the attitudes and perceptions of pupils towards conflict and its management (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Thus, an investigation into how conflict was perceived and responded to by pupils and teachers in different schools could provide a better picture of conflict, especially in the context of schooling, while also providing a better understanding of ways of developing appropriate responses. Furthermore, by seeking pupil and teacher perceptions of, and responses to conflict in different countries, it might be possible to establish whether different environments, educational systems, and cultures affect perceptions of and responses to conflict. This could then serve as a basis for further comparison. Thus, I sought to investigate the types of conflicts

occurring in secondary schools: how pupils and teachers perceived them, and how pupils, teachers and schools worked to manage them. In doing so, I was able to learn more about the nature of school-based conflicts and pupils', teachers', and schools' responses to them.

In theory, school-based practices and policies are designed to enhance and enrich the educational experiences of pupils, and most curricula or policies are developed by referring to governmental guidelines. However, these guidelines are mainly developed on the basis of the views of experts, predominately adults. The result of designing curricula or conflict policies in this way is that the pupil voice is often neglected. Many individual schools aim to include pupils in policy development, thereby ensuring accurate and effective programmes. However, this is dependent on school ethos and therefore means that certain pupils attending certain schools will benefit while others will not. Therefore, this study aimed to examine whether pupils felt that they had a voice in the development of policies, particularly those aimed at managing conflict, and whether pupils and teachers shared the same views of what constituted conflict and what they thought the best methods for dealing with it were.

Some research suggests that pupils involved in incidents of conflict are at risk from a host of adjustment difficulties, and that bystanders and onlookers who witness such conflict can also be negatively affected. It is also suggested that students who perceive there to be high levels of conflict in their schools often have more negative perceptions of school climate, which in turn leads to decreased school engagement (Astor, Benbenishty, Zeira & Vinokur, 2002; Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002). Witnessing conflict at school has also been associated with an increase in daily feelings of anxiety and school aversion (Nishina, Juvonen & Witkow, 2005). Thus, even when students are not directly involved in conflict they may be negatively affected in ways that can impede the learning process.

According to Batsche & Knoff, (1994), a high frequency of conflict within schools contributes to a fearful school atmosphere, a climate of intimidation where some students feel unhappy and unwelcome. Batsche & Knoff (1994) go on to state that most people will experience some form of conflict whilst studying in elementary and secondary school. However, they contend that statistics in the literature representing

levels of conflict may be skewed, as it is difficult to discern what constitutes conflict in schools.

Due to the comparative nature of the study, examining conflict in secondary schools/*folkeskoler* in two different countries, a brief overview of conflict management within schools in each country will now be given. In England, conflict is mainly dealt with in secondary schools as part of the curriculum, under Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). Although PSHE is not a subject in the traditional sense it covers statutory elements such as drugs, relationships, sexual intercourse and many other aspects of health and personal growth (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/PHSE). While conflict is mentioned briefly in the Key Stage 4 guidance, it is nonetheless mostly implicit in topics rather than being specifically mentioned, in contrast to many aspects of relationships. Below is an example:

"Negotiation: This could include using a range of strategies to solve problems and resolve conflicts, such as mediation."
(www.curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/uploads/QCA-07-3349-p_PSHE_Pers_KS4_tcm8-410.pdf.

While the DfE (Department for Education) oversees the development of the curriculum, the implementation of conflict policies is the responsibility of individual schools. Therefore it is nearly impossible to present a thorough overview of pastoral/conflict curricula for all of England. In short, school policies are set by governors within a national framework and governed by the individual schools. Some schools have more autonomy than others, especially academies. Academies are publicly funded independent schools, free from local authority and national control. Academies differ from other schools in that they have more freedom in the following areas:

- freedom from local authority control
- the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum
- the ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.

(http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/b0061252/about-academies,2009).

However, whether the school is private, public or an academy, there are certain measures that are compulsory for schools to enforce to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying. Moreover, anti-bullying policies are mandatory across all schools in England. In Denmark, the *folkeskole* curriculum is governed by the Ministry of Education and conflict is not discussed or managed as part of the school curriculum like it is in England. Instead of conflict being handled in PSHE classes, it is addressed in *Klassens Time* (The Lesson/Class Hour). *Klassens Time* is an allocated lesson that takes place once a week. The aim of *Klassens Time* is twofold: to prevent conflicts from happening, and to discuss and conflicts that have happened. During this lesson the teacher discusses any conflicts that may have occurred during the day or week with the pupils, and part of the lesson consists of managing conflicts that have arisen either prior to or during the lesson. If no conflicts have occurred (to the knowledge of the teacher) then the teacher will ask pupils if they are, or have been, experiencing any conflicts that they want to discuss. If not, *Klassens Time* is a 'free lesson' where pupils are free to engage in whatever activity they wish as long as they are quiet and remain in the classroom.

Often, however, if the teacher wants to discuss a conflict he or she will apply the method of *Kort og Godt* (Card and Good) to do so. *Kort og Godt* is a measure that has been used as a weapon against conflict in many Danish schools. It consists of "good" cards and "bad" cards that pupils give to one another (under the supervision of the teacher) to describe their feelings toward another pupil or situation. Also, the children and the teacher jointly formulate some rules on how to behave towards each other. Most schools in Denmark also have anti-bullying policies however, unlike in England, they are not mandatory.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate pupils' and teachers' perceptions and responses to school-based conflict in England and Denmark. A comparative approach was adopted to allow the researcher to focus on different perceptions and responses to conflict within different social contexts. Furthermore, it was possible to look into the strengths and weaknesses of approaches which were adopted by each country. This also provided more understanding of conflict as a whole. Ultimately, the

researcher was able to offer some suggestions for future studies into the field of school-based conflict.

1.4 The focus of the inquiry - England and Denmark

While choosing the focus for investigation is essential it is difficult for any study, especially a comparative one. On a sociological level, most countries have their own cultural fabric that plays a part in how people in those countries view and respond to conflict. Therefore, people in different countries are likely to have different perspectives of conflict and may have different responses to it. Thus, by comparing perceptions of conflict in different countries, one can enrich and deepen one's understanding, not only within each country but also cross-culturally. I chose England and Denmark as the focus of the inquiry, based on manageability, accessibility and familiarity. Comparing them proved to be a very interesting and revealing journey. The rationale for choosing England and Denmark as the focus of the research was as follows:

1) Education in Denmark was an area I was familiar with.

Growing up in Denmark and attending school there not only made me familiar with the culture, but with the education system as well. Therefore, choosing Denmark as part of my focus was a logical decision to make. Moreover it enabled me to research perceptions of and responses to conflict in Denmark while also allowing me to reflect on some of my own experiences of conflict at school.

2) England was a logical choice as I was residing in England for the duration of my research.

Living in England, while conducting this study, made England a logical and easy choice. Day-to-day living in England has familiarized me with its culture and has provided me with the opportunity to understand its infrastructure and social practices. This factor contributed greatly to my study in that it made my observations more insightful and accurate and allowed me to be familiar with the culture and cultural practices of England.

3) Both countries had their own definitions and categorisations of conflict which made the comparison very interesting.

The differences between England and Denmark were significant factors that contributed to its practices and outcomes. The differences will be explored in the following chapters.

1.5 Research questions

As will be clear from the preceding discussion the key question with which this study was concerned was "how is conflict perceived and responded to by pupils and teachers in English and Danish schools?" This overarching question led to the development of the following specific research questions:

1. How is conflict perceived by pupils and teachers in English and Danish schools?
2. How is pupil conflict responded to by pupils and teachers in English and Danish schools?
3. How do English and Danish schools respond to conflict?
    - Do pupils find these measures to be effective?
    - Do teachers find these measures to be effective?
4. Are pupils involved in decision-making at their schools?
5. Do the pupils and teachers share the same views of conflict?
6. Do culture and educational structure play a role in how conflict is perceived and responded to?

1.6 An outline of the thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters, in which the research study is introduced, the relevant literature is reviewed, the methodology and data are examined and analysed, and finally the conclusions and implications of the study are laid out. The chapters below are as follows:

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the literature on the perceptions and responses to conflict in schools, including an examination of the definition of conflict within secondary school settings, various conflict theories, definitions of bullying, theories on bullying, bullying as conflict, other types of secondary school conflicts, arguments concerning the effectiveness of conflict resolution programmes, practical applications of conflict resolution policy and finally, a look at educational conflict theory from a pastoral view.

Chapter 3

The methodology and research design of the study will be explained, and the rationale behind the selected methodology and research design will also be discussed. This will be followed by a detailed illustration of the research instruments applied. The procedure and methods of data analysis will also be briefly discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Data collected from pupils and teachers in England will be presented in this chapter. Brief comments and some comparisons will be made for each finding. A neutral stance will be taken during the process of data presentation.

Chapter 5

Data collected from pupils and teachers in Denmark will be presented in this chapter. Brief comments and some comparisons will be made for each finding. A neutral stance will be taken during the process of data presentation.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 presents data gathered from classroom observations in England and Denmark. Out of a total of 26 hours of classroom observations, a total of 15 observations yielded informative data about pupil conflicts; only a summary of these

observations will therefore be presented and discussed. Finally, the use of documentation in this research will be discussed.

Chapter 7

In this chapter, the findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will be discussed in detail, including the analysis of the results and the formulation of the implications. Significant findings will be cross-referenced with other evidence and with relevant studies. Possible explanations will be given for the similarities and differences of results. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the phenomena cumulatively, and to achieve a holistic view of conflict.

Chapter 8

The strengths and weaknesses of this study will be discussed in this chapter. The implications of this study will also be illustrated, followed by the conclusions of the research.

1.7 Conclusion

There were many reasons for me to choose this area as my focus of inquiry. My Baha'i beliefs had a significant influence on my choice of focus for my research. Through my spiritual beliefs, I have been taught the value of unity and harmony. Moreover, to achieve these, I have been guided that it is imperative to cease conflict at all levels. In order to do so, one requires a strong understanding of what constitutes conflict and by what means is it best to resolve it. Hopefully I will be able – through this inquiry – illuminate some ways in which pupils and teachers perceived and responded to conflicts.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Perceptions of and Responses to Conflict

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the definition of conflict, beginning with a review of the concept as a whole. It starts with a discussion on the significance of definitions and how subtleties in definition can change the nature or meaning of a word, thought or action; it is important to note that it was not the intention of this study to try to create a standardised definition of conflict. This will be followed by a review of a number of conflict theories to highlight the breadth of the various concepts of conflict and the various paradigms in which it is manifested.

The discussion of conflict theory then turns to a review of the literature on secondary school conflict in England and conflict in *folkeskoler*. However, it was found that there was only very limited discussion on conflict in secondary schools and *folkeskoler* in the literature, as very few studies specifically addressed conflict as an umbrella concept covering different types of conflicts (including internal conflicts) within secondary schools. Rather, the literature offers an extensive coverage of external, physical conflict such as bullying. Therefore, this research will discuss how these issues are related to conflict in English and Danish schools and how they relate to the aims of this study.

The following section offers a review of pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict from the current literature, and looks at the nature of perceptions in relation to conflict in schools. First, an overview of the term perception and its importance for understanding issues/concepts/items/articles is debated. A discussion on the role of perception in understanding conflict in schools is followed by an examination of the role perception plays in understanding bullying within schools; a study by Bradshaw et al. (2008) is reviewed to help support this particular discussion. The final section of this chapter reviews both individual and school-based responses to conflict; in doing this, it

highlights the natural responses that individuals elicit to conflict, while assessing the types of policies and programmes offered in secondary schools that are aimed at managing pupil conflicts.

2.0.1 The process of Literature Review

Specific information on the focus of the research proved to be very limited. This meant that I had to investigate the literature through a number of different avenues. To this end, I looked through multiple textbooks, journals and newspapers. I focused on sources relating to conflict or the study of conflict resolution. As I was undertaking a cross-cultural comparative study, I had to review both English and Danish sources. The majority of the Danish texts were reviewed while visiting family in Denmark and through a library portal linked up with the University of Copenhagen archives. I obtained the majority of my English-based information through the University of Warwick and my supervisor. I scanned several volumes of text at the University through the library portal.

Several search engines were used in the process of the literature search. The search engine used the most was the University of Warwick online library catalogue under which the following main keywords were searched; conflict, pupil conflict, conflict schools, pupil conflicts and secondary schools, pupil conflicts and *folkeskole*, perceptions of conflict, responses to conflicts. Other search engines used frequently in this research included Google lexilogos (online Danish - English translator), and Wikipedia. The key search terms were chosen in order to reflect accurately they concepts on which the study is based. To extend and detail my searches, I used words in combination, for example, pupil conflicts and English secondary schools. Depending on which search engine I was using, I input the words using conjoining terms such as ‘and’ in order to retrieve the maximum number of results.

2.1 Conceptualization of conflict

It is impossible to understand conflict without seeking to define it. Like many other words, the term definition has subtly different meanings in different contexts. A definition may be used in the general sense or in a manner that reflects the speaker’s

immediate and intentional meaning of the term. For example, in formal languages like mathematics, a stipulated definition guides a specific discussion. A descriptive definition can be shown to be right or wrong by comparison to general usage, but a stipulated definition can only be disproved by showing logical contradiction (Ierodiakonou, 1993).

Stevenson (1938) has identified 'persuasive' definition as a form of 'stipulative definition' which purports to describe the 'true' or 'commonly accepted' meaning of a term while in reality stipulating an altered use, perhaps as an argument for some specific view. The terms thus defined will often involve emotionally charged but imprecise notions, such as 'freedom', 'terrorism' and 'democracy'.

As stated above, defining a term or concept is often difficult owing to the nature of what a definition is. In order for a term or concept to be readily defined, it must share characteristics with some other known term or concept. This notion suggests that not every defined term is independent from another and that there is a continuity of meaning. As such, the use of certain words can elicit an image or understanding of a term or concept that is very similar to that derived in the use of other words.

2.1.1 General overview of definition of conflict

Conflict is a varied and difficult term to define and as such there is no universal definition. A standard definition, however, accessible in most dictionaries, states that conflict is a noun, defined as,

"1. A fight, battle, war, armed conflict. 2. Competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state of actions. 3. Mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes or external or internal demand"(Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary).

Similarly, the Oxford Dictionary (online source 2010), states that the word conflict stems from the Latin root to 'strike' together and defines it as,

"Any situation where incompatible activities, feelings, or intentions occur together. Conflict may take place within one person, between two or more people who know each other, or between large groups of people who do not know each other. It may involve actual confrontation between persons, or merely symbolic confrontation through words and deeds. The conflict may be expressed through verbal denigration, accusations, threats, or through physical violence to persons or property. Or the conflict may remain unexpressed, as in avoidance and denial."

From the above definitions it is evident that conflict can be contextualized in different ways, which means that it is flexible and adaptable to fit a certain situation or context. Therefore the definition of conflict can be said, at least in part, to be dependent upon the context in which it is placed.

2.1.2 Definition of conflict within school settings

A school-specific definition of conflict was not found in the literature. Instead, definitions relating to behaviours and actions linked to conflict were found. For example, when typing the term 'conflict' into a search engine, definitions of bullying appeared instead. Interestingly enough, the definitions found pertaining to bullying did not reference the idea of conflict, though elements of conflict were apparent in these terms. For example, Smith (2003) defined bullying as, "a situation where a young child is constantly picked on by older children or groups" (p. 592). Smith attested that bullying behaviour included: kicking, hitting, threatening and sending nasty notes and social exclusion. It would appear from his definition of bullying that there may not be a need to devise a definition of school-based conflict, as bullying incorporates a wide spectrum of activities/behaviours that would potentially be deemed as conflict.

However, Dan Olweus (1995) has pointed out that Smith's definition of bullying does not account for a situation where two children of equal size and strength have a physical or verbal altercation. He considers this scenario to lie outside of Smith's definition of bullying. This variation in definitions highlights the importance of finding and developing definitions of conflict that are more specific, rather than concocting definitions that are too general and comprehensive.

Breaking down the concept of conflict into identifiable substrata enables researchers to better understand the nuances and details of particular conflict and, in turn, to better address them. This approach to developing a workable understanding of conflict has been used in various sectors of society and within different paradigms, including inter/intrapersonal situations. These developments have evolved to form conflict theories that are aimed at understanding the types of conflict manifesting within specific areas of society and in turn, seek to address them. Therefore, in order to better understand conflict in schools it is important to look at various conflict theories to see

how they interpret and address conflict and to evaluate whether such theories can be transposed to within educational settings.

2.2 Conflict theories

Conflict theories are helpful in that they can help identify and explain potential causes of conflict within certain contexts. Moreover, conflict theories offer a powerful analysis of the origins of conflict and how best to resolve it. The basis of conflict theories is that they highlight the significance of power relationships in the definition, identification and handling of conflict. Knapp (1994) argues that Wright Mills, the so-called founder of Modern Conflict Theory, states that social structures are created through conflict between people with different interests and resources. He goes on to say that individuals and resources in turn are influenced by these structures and by the unequal commission and distribution of power and resources within society. Conflict theories links the perception and treatment of conflict to inequality in society and offer a powerful analysis of how the injustices of society produce conflict and result in different systems of justice for disadvantaged and privileged groups.

The conflict theories that will be discussed below are: Marx's Social Conflict Theory, Freud's Psychological Conflict Model; Coser's Sociology-based Conflict Theory, and Workplace Conflict Theory. These particular models were chosen because they represent a wide spectrum of thought and cover a number of different paradigms in relation to society.

2.2.1 Marx's social conflict theory

A major theory that outlines and defines conflict is Karl Marx's social conflict theory, written in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Karl Marx was a distinguished German theorist and political activist. He believed that conflicts arrive from power imbalances. His theory on social conflict argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within society have different amounts of material and non-material resources (the wealthy vs. the poor); the more powerful groups use their power in order to exploit groups with less power (McCarney, 2005).

Marx believed that this model was prevalent the most in capitalist societies. He argued that capitalism is exploitative, specifically the way in which unpaid labour (surplus value) is extracted from the working class (McCarney, 2005). Marx referred to the practice of having workers work for you for unpaid labour as the 'commodification' of human labour meaning that the groups in society with less power i.e. the peasants work for the landowner and pay him certain fees in return for the use of his land (McCarney, 2005). He argued that while the production process is socialized, ownership remains in the hands of few (McCarney, 2005).

Marx believed that this model was prevalent in capitalist societies. He argued that capitalism is exploitative, specifically the way in which surplus value (the difference between the labourer's pay and the market value of the goods produced) is extracted by employers from the working class (McCarney, 2005). Marx referred to the practice of employers paying workers for their labour as the 'commodification' of human labour, meaning that some groups in society, the workers, have less power while others (such as employers) have more (McCarney, 2005). Workers, who comprise the majority, only have their labour to sell while employers, the few, exercise ownership of the means of production (McCarney, 2005).

Marx's solution to this imbalance of power in society was for the working class to seize political power internationally through a social revolution, expropriate the capitalist classes around the world and place the productive capacities of society into collective ownership (McCarney, 2005). Upon this material foundation classes would be abolished and the material basis for all forms of inequality between humankind would dissolve. Marx's theory facilitated the communist/social movements across the Soviet Union, China and Cuba (O'Laughlin, 1975). It also gave rise to labour unions and feminist-communism.

2.2.2 Freud's psychology - based conflict theory

Conflict is not confined within a specific social theory. Freud's conflict theory is psychologically based. He attributes the cause of conflict to unconscious emotions and states that, at a psychological level, conflict exists when the reduction of one motivating stimulus involves an increase in another, so that a new adjustment is demanded.

According to Freud conflict is applicable from the instant that this clash occurs. Thus, even when we say that there is a potential conflict we are implying that there is already a conflict of direction, even though a clash may not yet have occurred.

Breuer and Freud (1983) present a theory on conflict that combine their studies on psychoanalytic theory and conflict, and attributes conflict to several key factors. For example, they state that self-interest is basic to human nature. The desire to progress one's self interest is controlled in the conscious state but governed by unconscious aggressive forces that seek expression (Breuer & Freud, 1893). The need for the unconscious forces to express themselves often leads to internal turmoil that may unsettle and confuse an individual. This clash of desires can remain an internal conflict, the expression of which may manifest in depression or self-administered harm. Or the conflict may show itself as an external expression that often leads to conflict arising between the person experiencing the turmoil and someone else who may stand in the way of that individual forwarding their self-interest.

Freud is known as the father of psychology and one of his most important achievements was as the founder of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis has three applications: an investigation of the mind; a systematized set of theories about human behaviour and a method of treating psychological and emotional illnesses (Moore & Fine, 1968). The type of treatment refers to one in which the patient verbalizes thoughts, including free associations, fantasies, and dreams, from which the analyst formulates the unconscious conflicts causing the patient's symptoms and problems, and interprets them for the patient, creating insight with the aim of resolving the problems (Breuer & Freud,1893).

The specifics of the analyst's interventions typically include confronting, and clarifying the patient's pathological defences, wishes and guilt (Guimón, 2003). Through the analysis of conflicts, psychoanalytic treatment can clarify how patients are, unconsciously, their own worst enemies: it is unconscious, symbolic reactions that have been stimulated by experience that are causing symptoms (Guimón, 2003).

2.2.3 Coser's functions of conflict

Conflict has also been studied and defined from a sociological perspective, one of which is attributed to American sociologist Lewis A. Coser (1913 – 2003). Coser was the first sociologist to try to bring together structural functionalism and conflict theory. His work was focused on finding the functions of social conflict and included the idea that in a society that seems to be disintegrating, conflict with another society (inter-group conflict) may restore the integrative core. For example, the cohesiveness of Israeli Jews might be attributed to the long-standing conflict with the Arabs. Coser (1956) also found that conflicts serve a communication function. Prior to conflict, groups may be unsure of their adversary's position, but as a result of conflict, positions and boundaries between groups often become clarified, leaving individuals better able to decide on a proper course of action in relation to their adversary.

Coser's work examines conflict between and within groups. He also looks at the dynamics of a group or groups when considering the levels and intensity of conflict. Coser breaks down conflict into two main categories: internal and external. He states that internal conflict emerges within a group and external conflict originates between groups. Coser notes that factors that affect the level and intensity of conflict include 'personality involvement', which he refers to the level of emotional connection between individuals of a group and the frequency of interaction (Coser, 1956).

Coser (1956) does not propose methods of dealing with conflict, as he does not necessarily view conflict as something negative that requires resolution. Instead, he argues that, depending on the circumstances and the level of group cohesion, a conflict can serve to unite and forge bonds between individuals within a group. Moreover, he states that conflict arising between two or more groups, where the level of cohesion and interaction is minimal, will focus primarily on the issues at hand and therefore not conjure latent hostility that may fuel the situation. Therefore, such conflicts will be short, though they may be intense.

2.2.4 Workplace conflict theory

Workplace conflict theory focuses on the specific types of conflict that occur in workplaces. According to the doctrine of workplace theory the conflicts that arise in

workplaces may be shaped by the unique aspects of the environment, including the long hours people spend at their workplace, the hierarchical structure of the organization, and the difficulties (such as the financial consequences) that may be involved in switching to a different workplace (Turner & Weed, 1983). In this respect workplaces have much in common with schools, especially pre-college educational institutions in which students are less autonomous. In workplace settings, much like secondary schools, individuals have to conform to the rules and ethos of the environment. Although there is a certain level of autonomy, such as choosing which assignments to work on, or which classes to attend, the individuals in these settings must comply with the nature of their surroundings.

According to Blaine Donais (2006), author of *Workplaces that Work*, there are four causes of workplace conflict: interpersonal, organisational, changes/trends and external factors. Interpersonal conflict is the most apparent form of conflict for workplace participants. It is easy enough to observe the results of office politics, gossip, and rumours. Also language and personality styles often clash, creating a great deal of conflict in the workplace. According to Donais (2006) there are also a number of organizational sources of conflict, particularly those relating to hierarchy and the inability to resolve conflicting interests, which are predominant in most workplaces. Donais (2006) goes on to state that labour/management and supervisor/employee tensions are heightened by power differences. Differences in supervisory styles between departments can also be a cause of conflict. Furthermore, many workplaces suffer from constant reorganization, leading to further stress and conflict. Lastly, external factors such as economic pressures caused by recession, changing markets, domestic and foreign competition, and the effects of free trade between countries can also lead to conflict in the workplace.

Workplace conflict is not necessarily negative. In fact, according to Gull (2008), conflict is one of the drivers for improved team performance. If managed well, it can lead to better decisions, more creative ideas and higher quality output from a team. If managed poorly, however, workplace conflict can stop teamwork and hinder individuals from achieving their personal goals. According to Gull (2008), one way of effectively managing conflict in the workplace is through the application of game theory. Game theory attempts to capture mathematically behaviour in strategic situations such as

games, where an individual's success in making choices depends on the choices of others. A number of 'games' fall within the model of game theory. Some of these games are used to test individual ability, while others are used to assess team play. According to Donais (2006), knowing which of these games to apply will depend on the source of the workplace conflict.

Dan Olweus (1994) argues that if left unchecked, workplace conflict can deteriorate into a form of bullying, which translates as *mobbing* in Norwegian. Olweus (1994) argues,

> *"…workplace bullying often takes place within the established rules and policies of the organization and society. Such actions are not necessarily illegal and may not even be against the firm's regulations; however, the damage to the targeted employee and to workplace morale is obvious … workplace mobbing can be considered as a 'virus' or a 'cancer' that spreads throughout the workplace via gossip, rumour and unfounded accusations. It is a deliberate attempt to force a person out of their workplace by humiliation, general harassment, emotional abuse and/or terror. Mobbing can be described as being 'ganged up on' (p 3).*

Similarly, Shallcross, Ramsey & Barker (2008) make a reference to a bully-victim scenario, arguing that mobbing is carried out by a leader (who can be a manager, a co-worker, or subordinate) who rallies others into a systematic and frequent "mob-like" behaviour toward the victim.

2.2.5 Applicability of conflict theories to education

None of the conflict theories outlined above can be transposed directly into an educational setting. Marx's theory is too political to be of use within an educational sphere, recommending as it does changing the social landscape of capitalist countries by introducing ideas of commune and sharing. It is true that with a change in the social/political landscape of a country the education system may also change but, as of yet, there seems to be no literature that examines this. Freud's theory is useful and could potentially be applied in a secondary school setting in counselling and pastoral care settings. However, it is a by-product of psychological research that examined individual cases and a general application of this theory into secondary schools therefore seems impractical. Coser's theory, along with workplace conflict theory, comes closest to being applicable comprehensively in educational settings. Coser's look at group

interplay and the impact of this on the level and frequency of conflict can be used in guiding the assessment of school-based conflict; it does not, though, help to define it.

Workplace conflict theory goes a step further in that it evaluates factors causing conflicts in addition to addressing them; again, however, for this theory to be directly applicable to the classroom a re-examination of the factors causing conflict must be conducted.

Workplace conflict theory does provide a solid starting point for examining school-based conflict because, as previously mentioned, the environment of the workplace is similar to that of secondary schools. The daily interaction of pupils mirrors that of work colleagues, for example, and power hierarchies exist in educational settings as they do in the workplace.

What these theories do offer are examples of how research into certain paradigms of society can yield a better understanding of the issues and suggest ways to best resolve aspects of conflict. Each of these theories highlights the importance of examining conflict more closely.

2.2.6 Education conflict theory

The literature does not provide an agreed theory of education conflict. Behaviours reflecting aspects of conflict have, however, been researched and discussed. The most prevalent of these is bullying, however, bullying is only one example of conflict found in secondary schools. Other conflict-laden behaviours such as self-harming and eating disorders do exist in secondary schools but are underrepresented within the literature on school conflict. In this section the evolution of bullying and why it is such an important part of secondary school policy will be examined, starting with a look at various definitions of bullying.

2.3 Definitions of bullying

Even a term like ‘bullying’ which has been widely researched and applied in the literature on school conflict is difficult to define. Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefooghe (2002) researched the definition of bullying cross-culturally. Their study was premised

on the need to obtain a fuller understanding of what constitutes bullying across nations and what role, if any, language played in this understanding. Smith et al. (2002) state:

"…there is a need to examine the use of the word bullying and cognate terms in a variety of languages, at an international level, to understand fully the similarities and differences in the phenomenon across different countries and language groups. In any culture, the issue of definition is central for accurate statistics on the incidence of bullying; the study of developmental changes in perceptions of bullying on the part of children, adolescents and adults; the evaluation of the effectiveness of different interventions to combat it; and clarification of individual rights and legal responsibilities" (p.1119).

Smith et al. (2002) identified several definitions of bullying within the education system, one of which was taken from a study conducted by Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukianen (1992) who made a distinction between direct physical aggression (punching), direct verbal aggression (name-calling), and indirect aggression. Indirect aggression was characterized by its covert nature and use of third parties, and occurred principally in the form of gossiping, spreading rumours and social exclusion (p.1120). Similarly, Olweus (1999) commented:

"…bullying, is thus characterized by the following three criteria: aggressive behaviour or intentional harm doing, which is carried out repeatedly and over time, and in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power" (p.14).

Olweus' definition of bullying is widely accepted by many researchers (Farrington, 1993; Smith & Sharp 1994). The Smith et al. (2002) study, however, showed that defining bullying is very difficult; they argued that it was nearly impossible to create a generalizable definition of bullying that would satisfy variations from country to country. This finding echoed that of Arora (1996), who drew attention to the various terms that cognate with 'bullying' in English and in several other languages, concluding that the word 'bully' is not easy to translate.

2.3.1 Theories on bullying

Bertrand Russell (2001) was quoted as saying, "I found one day in school a boy of medium size ill-treating a smaller boy. I expostulated, but he replied: 'The bigs hit me, so I hit the babies; that's fair" (p 3). Bullying is an aspect of aggression that has been well researched. Some have described bullying as 'proactive aggression' as opposed to 'reactive aggression'. Proactive aggression has been described as "an

unprovoked aversive means of influencing or coercing another person and is more goal-directed than reactive aggression" (Price & Dodge, 1989).

The distinction between proactive and reactive aggression is useful in that it implies that to identify bullying we should exclude provoked aggression (Price & Dodge, 1989). In practice, it is sometimes difficult to say whether an aggressive act has been provoked by what the target has done or not done, or whether the aggressive act can only be understood by reference to the state of mind of the aggressor, for instance, to the feelings of hostility or paranoia of the aggressor at the time. A further distinction within 'proactive aggression' may be made. We can label some proactive aggression as 'instrumental aggression', which implies aggression used as a means to achieve some object; in the case of a child, say, a desired toy (Price & Dodge, 1989). Alternatively, proactive aggression may take the form of aggressive behaviour in which the goal is to dominate or intimidate another person. Bullying may be related to each of these, though commonly it is seen as related more closely to the latter.

Finally, we should recognize that some scholars have conceived bullying in relation to how power is used or abused. For example, in their examination of bullying in schools Smith & Sharp (1994) defined bullying as the "systematic abuse of power" (p.2). This definition raises fundamental ethical questions of how power should or should not be used, and questions of where to draw the line between proactive aggression and abuse of power.

It is relevant to make a distinction between malign and non-malign aggression. The former involves the intention to threaten or hurt; the latter is action that we might very well consider to be bullying, except when we learn that the perpetrator did not intend to cause any harm (Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2003). Some of what passes for bullying is non-malign in nature. When children become aware that they are causing real distress to a person they have been teasing or taunting, pushing around or excluding, they sometimes stop. Doing so demonstrates that the bullying was not malign, even though it might have been deplorable. If we allow the parallel between the bullying of children in schools and bullying by nations, examples of perceived bullying that could be non-malign are not difficult to find. Ignorance or insensitivity about how

people from a different culture would interpret a statement may result in a threat being perceived by some people when it was not necessarily intended.

The means by which people bully have been frequently described and categorised. They include both physical and psychological means. The injury or discomfort may be delivered or induced directly by a blow, an insult or offensive gesture or indirectly through spreading rumours, social manipulation or exclusion. In the listing of actions by which bullying may be carried out, there is a danger that the behaviour itself may be seen as bullying, regardless of its motivation or the social context in which it occurs. However, this is not the case. For example, a blow may be struck in self-defence; an infant may be excluded from an activity because it is dangerous for someone so young. We must remind ourselves that bullying is behaviour intended to hurt and is typically repeated over time.

However, what happens in the situation where two people of equal strength have the occasional fight or quarrel? (Olweus, 1994) The individuals or groups involved may want to hurt each other, but is this still bullying? Olweus answered this question by suggesting that bullying occurs only when there is an imbalance of power. The aggressor or group of aggressors, are more powerful in some way than the person they are targeting. This suggestion has been adopted by other theorists as the basis of bullying (Hunter et al., 2003; Farrington, 1993; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Champion, Vernberg & Shipman, 2003). However, it does raise the difficult question of how to assess the differences in power that are relevant to bullying.

There are two further considerations that may help us to identify bullying. One focuses on the feelings of the target of aggression (Hunter et al., 2003), the sense of oppression that the victim of bullying invariably feels. In fact, one influential writer in this field, the English criminologist David Farrington (1993) saw oppression as central to what bullying is. He defined bullying as a repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person. What is happening is invariably seen by the victim as hard to bear as well as being unjust. It does not follow, of course, that the victim's judgment is sound. An unsympathetic critic may see some justification for the oppression. The practical point is that one should always listen first to what the victim has to say. A sense of being oppressed is a necessary indicator of

whether bullying is taking place, but is not sufficient in itself to identify bullying (Farrington, 1993).

2.3.2 Peer victimization

The term peer victimization is used to refer to a form of peer abuse in which a child is frequently the target of peer aggression (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). Hence, bullying is a special case of peer victimization, since the latter does not explicitly include the issues of power imbalance and intent included in the definition of bullying. However, given that peer victimization is a recurring aggressive act with well-documented negative effects, it is appealing to assume that victims experience difficulty responding effectively and that aggressors are not acting with positive or benign intent. This would imply that peer victimization is, in the real world, simply a different name for bullying and that peer victimization in its purest sense does not exist. Indeed, researchers already use the terms interchangeably by measuring peer victimization but discussing results in terms of bullying (e.g. Champion, Vernberg & Shipman, 2003).

Treating peer victimization and bullying as distinct has implications for intervention and prevention strategies. Given that bullying appears to be perceived more negatively, it may be important to gauge whether children who report being bullied actually perceive power imbalance and aggressor intent. Students reporting these may require extra help dealing with their emotional reactions to their experience (Hunter et al., 2003). However, more research is needed on the differences between these two overlapping experiences before making concrete suggestions regarding how each should be dealt with. Moreover, establishing that a difference does exists between two such closely related concepts highlights the concern that perceptions of conflict, and subsequently reactions to conflict, may not be as effective or inclusive as required to invoke peaceful solutions.

2.3.3 Bullying as conflict

From the above definitions and theories on bullying, it appears that bullying is a pervasive form of conflict. Bullying incorporates various aspects of conflict, such as verbal and physical abuse. Moreover, it occurs between two or more parties, thereby

satisfying the definition that conflict arises between individuals or groups. However, bullying does not encompass all types of conflict found within schools, as the discussion on peer victimisation suggests. There is a need to examine other types of conflict that exist in secondary schools. The strong focus on bullying is important, as it helps to find resolutions to such a problem. However, it should not overshadow the fact that other types of conflict are prevalent.

2.4 Other types of conflict in secondary schools

Although bullying is only one type of conflict experienced in schools it has a prominent place the literature on conflict in secondary schools and is defined as having such a broad spectrum that it covers a number of specific forms of conflict as well. However, there are other types of conflict, predominately those that are internal, that seem to be underrepresented in the literature. Below is a discussion of two of the more serious types.

2.4.1 Eating disorders

Eating disorders in secondary schools/*folkeskoler* are examined in this section to show that pupils do experience a number of unique conflicts in secondary schools/*folkeskoler* that are underrepresented in the literature. Moreover, such an examination highlights the fact that specialised forms of intervention are required to reduce and manage pupil conflict. In her article, “Eating Disorders and Adolescents: What are the Issues for Secondary Schools”, Joan Ransley (1999) mentions that it is likely that in a typical comprehensive school of between 1,500 and 2,000 pupils, up to 20 pupils could have an eating disorder and a larger numbers of pupils will have developed some of the symptoms of an eating disorder such as weight loss, the restriction of food intake, self-induced vomiting, chewing and spitting out food, and bouts of chaotic overeating. The prevalence of such behaviours has been estimated to 3-5% of teenage girls. This implies that about 50 girls in a “typical” secondary school may suffer from an eating disorder (Ransley, 1999).

Ransley (1999) goes on to argue that eating disorders are understood to be a reflection of a misguided view of one’s self-image. These views have various points of

origination and therefore differ between cases. For example interpersonal factors, or those that involve other individuals and society at large, seem to play a role in influencing the development of, and the recovery from, eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder.

Regardless of the behaviours associated with a particular eating disorder underlying issues such as low self-esteem, low self-confidence and feelings of being overwhelmed and out of control are common throughout them all. These feelings often spill over into social interactions, making factors such as poor communication (especially in regards to expressing feelings), troubled personal relationships and ineffective coping strategies common to influencing eating disorders.

Individuals who are unable to communicate clearly and effectively often prefer to hold in their emotions, sometimes described as “swallowing” their emotions (disordered-eating.co.uk, 2009). This is particularly true of negative emotions such as anger, sadness or disappointment. As such, recognising that someone has an eating disorder is very difficult to discern. Moreover, because it is unlikely that someone suffering from an eating disorder will openly discuss it with others, getting help is difficult (disordered-eating.co.uk, 2009).

Rather than to confront another individual with these emotions, many individuals choose to remain silent but express their feelings and frustrations in other ways, including through eating disorders. According to Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of conflict, this is an example of an internal turmoil festering inside an individual.

Some individuals also keep quiet, but end up convincing themselves that they were the cause of the problem in the first place. This can lead to negative self-talk, such as telling themselves that they are stupid or that they are always causing problems. Either way, when emotions are not expressed but are instead projected onto food and into eating behaviours, an eating disorder can result.

2.4.2 Deliberate self-harm

Another issue that is prevalent amongst secondary school pupils is deliberate self-harm (DSH). According to Ron Best (2006), DSH is on the increase among school-aged pupils, and it is the responsibility of the teachers and the school to be aware of and to respond to this issue appropriately under their pastoral care programmes (Best, 2006). According to Best (2006), empirical evidence about pupil experiences of and responses to DSH seems not to exist. A Nuffield Foundation-funded study in England, however, found that DSH does indeed exist in schools but teachers' awareness of DSH is patchy and their reactions are often those of shock, panic and anxiety (Best, 2006).

In certain settings such as hospitals and prisons, DSH may be understood and dealt with as a mental health problem but in schools with referral units it is recognized and dealt with as a behavioural issue (Best, 2006). Moreover, for teachers in 'mainstream' schools, the situation is very different. Although pastoral care is a long-accepted aspect of schools' provisions for children's all-round development and well-being, there is little evidence to suggest that deliberate self-harm involving tissue-damage is in many peoples' minds when they talk about teachers' pastoral work (Best, 2006). Moreover, my review of the literature on pastoral care and personal-social education did not flag up one reference to these kinds of behaviours.

The literature review did, however, confirm that eating disorders and DSH are two types of conflicts being experienced by pupils in secondary schools. Although these conflicts are experienced by pupils in secondary schools/*folkeskoler*, very little research has been done on them. Additionally, eating disorders and DSH have sometimes been viewed as responses to conflict rather than as evidence of internal conflict. Even if that were the case, eating disorders and DSH represent issues affecting secondary school pupils that are outside the realm of behaviours associated with bullying and the very fact that they are not associated with bullying makes it desirable to study them further(Best, 2006; Ransley, 1999). The lack of research into other types of conflicts such as DSH and eating disorders suggests that further research on these conflicts is required. Perhaps with greater research, internal conflicts such as eating disorders will be categorized in such a way to make them easier to understand and deal with.

2.5 Perceptions of conflict

Gibson (1972) argues that perception is direct, and not subject to hypotheses testing. He contends that we have enough sensory information to interact with the environment directly, without needing to process or interpret our surroundings. For Gibson, sensation is perception: what you see is what you get. He called this the top-down process. For example, understanding difficult handwriting is easier when reading complete sentences than when reading single and isolated words. Gibson (1972) attributes this understanding to the meaning of the surrounding words, which serve to provide the context. Thus, according to Gibson, there is no need for us to process (interpret) our world, as the information we receive about it through our senses, such as size, shape, distance etc. is sufficiently detailed.

Conversely, Gregory (1972) argued that perception is a bottom-up process, where we first sense something through our senses and then analyse it with our brain. According to Gregory, it is not enough to see an object in order to know what it is; we also need to identify it (its function). For example, if we see a light switch, we won't know what it is to till we push it down and see the light coming on, meaning that sensory information is analysed in one direction: from simple analysis of raw sensory data to ever increasing complexity of analysis through the visual system, which contain features sufficient to distinguish different objects from each other. In addition, perception involves identifying the function of the object: whether it can be thrown, grasped, sat on etc.

Gibson's (1972) and Gregory's (1972) theories highlight that there is more than one way for us to interpret our environment. For the most part, the different ways in which people perceive themselves and their surroundings can be explained by individuality. Moreover, each individual's experiences will help mould their perceptions, as they draw on them to make sense of a situation or issue. However, within certain circumstances, it is necessary to have uniformity of opinion and perception. For example, within a court of law, it is important that members of the jury perceive the evidence presented by the defendant and prosecution equally in order to reach a verdict. When it comes to school-based conflict, it is equally important to have shared perceptions between pupils and teachers on what constitutes conflict; any

differences that exist between teachers' and pupils' conceptions of bullying may have serious consequences for the commitment that teachers employ in attempting to stop conflicts from occurring (Boulton, 1997).

2.5.1 Cognition and perception

An analysis of the differences between the two terms 'cognition' and 'perception' can lead to a better overall understanding of the meaning of perception. Cognition is the *scientific* term for "the process of thought" (Lycan, 1999). Usage of the term varies in different disciplines; for example in psychology and cognitive science it usually refers to an information processing view of an individual's psychological functions. Other interpretations of cognition link it to the development of concepts; individual minds, groups, and organizations.

The term cognition (from the Latin *cognoscere*, "to know, conceptualize or to recognize") refers to a faculty for the processing of information, applying knowledge, and changing preferences. Cognition, or cognitive processes, can be natural or artificial, conscious or unconscious (Lycan, 1999). Education, for instance, has the explicit task of developing children's cognition and within a school setting choices are made regarding the environment and permitted actions that lead to a formed experience. However, perception is subjective, so how a pupil reads or understands a concept depends on how they process it.

2.5.2 Perceptions of conflict within schools

At the onset of the study it was hypothesized that there would be discrepancies in the way in which pupils and teachers viewed conflict within secondary schools. However, a literature review did not confirm this, as no sources were found comparing pupil/teacher views of pupil conflicts in schools. Instead, numerous studies examining conflicts between pupils and teachers were found (Hamre, Pianta, Mashburn & Downer, 2007; Cothran & Ennis, 1997). These studies were useful insofar as they suggested that conflict exists in the school environment, but did not provide evidence of teacher awareness of pupil conflicts or of whether pupils and teachers shared similar notions of pupil conflicts.

2.5.3 Bullying as the focus

The majority of articles and studies found in the literature relating to pupil conflicts within secondary schools in England and *folkeskoler* in Denmark revolved around bullying. As mentioned previously, bullying is one form of conflict. However, it has dominated the literature on school conflict and is viewed as the predominant form of pupil conflict in secondary schools and *folkeskoler*. In order to better understand why this is, it is important to reflect on the impetus that bullying has in the school environment. Therefore, examining the nature, prevalence and perceptions of bullying is useful because it can highlight different opinions held by pupils and teachers about both bullying and conflict in general. However, it must be remembered that this study aims to examine various forms of pupil conflict in schools and not just bullying or bullying specifically.

2.5.4 School-based perceptions of bullying

Bullying among school children has been widely investigated. Interestingly, however, the available evidence suggests that adults are only aware of a small amount of the bullying behaviour that takes place in schools. Boulton (1997) argues that there is a need to provide more data on teachers' conceptions of bullying. As mentioned previously, Boulton (1997) stated that any differences between teachers' and pupils' conceptions of bullying/conflict can have serious consequences for the commitment that teachers employ in their efforts to stop bullying/conflicts.

However in his study, Boulton (1997) found one difference between teachers' and pupils' definitions of bullying. He notes "teachers focus on the more obvious and less subtle forms of bullying such as direct verbal and physical abuse and overlook indirect aggression and the repetitive and intentional aspect of bullying" (Boulton, 1997 p.223). Research by Madsen (1996) suggests that pupils tend to 'underplay' the importance of an imbalance of power in their conceptions of bullying behaviour.

For both students and staff, teasing (direct verbal) was the most common form of bullying, followed by name-calling. Teasing was reported by 67.2% of teachers and by 35.7% of pupils. Name-calling was reported by 63.3% of teachers and by 32.9% of

pupils. Although both pupils and teachers seem to perceive teasing and name-calling as the most common types of bullying experienced in their school, the teachers reported teasing and name-calling twice as frequently as the students did (Boulton, 1997).

2.5.5 Perceptions of bullying - the Bradshaw et al. study

In 2007 Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan carried out a study in the UK to examine pupil/teacher perceptions of bullying. Bradshaw et al. (2007) argued that although bullying and other forms of peer victimization at school were a growing concern, there had been little research examining the potential differences between student and staff perceptions of the frequency of bullying, most common location and forms of bullying, severity of the problem, social norms related to bullying, and responses to witnessing bullying. Bradshaw et al. (2007) focused on pupil/teacher perceptions of bullying because they feared that much of the difficulty surrounding whole-school bullying prevention efforts stem from the perceptual differences between school staff and students.

The results of this study showed that over 49% of pupils reported being bullied by other pupils at school at least once during the past month, whereas 30.8% reported bullying others during that time. Defining frequent involvement in bullying as occurring two or more times within the past month, 40.6% of students reported some type of frequent involvement in bullying, with 23.2% as a frequent victim, 8.0% as a frequent bully, and 9.4% as a frequent bully or victim. When asked "What percentage of students do you think have been bullied two or more times during the last month?," 71.4% of staff estimated that 15% or less of the students at their school were frequently bullied, while 40% of middle school (MS) staff and 57% of high school (HS) staff estimated that the percentage of students bullied in the past month was 10% or less (p.372).

However, the prevalence rates of frequent victimization as indicated by students were 32.7% for MS, and 22.7% for HS students. The discrepancy between staff perceptions of the rates of frequent victimization and the student-reported rates appeared to be the most salient for staff, with less than 1% of staff members reporting bullying rates similar to those indicated by students (33.7%). Similarly, MS and HS

staff underreported bullying prevalence rates, with only 5.1% of MS and 8.9% of HS staff accurately perceiving student victimization rates (p.373).

The data on forms of victimization indicated that the direct verbal forms were the most commonly reported by students, followed by relational forms and then direct physical forms. Although prior research suggests that verbal and relational forms may be less apparent to teachers than physical forms (Boulton & Underwood, 1994; Leff et al., 1999), a large proportion of the staff in Bradshaw et al.'s (2007) sample reported having witnessed these forms of bullying. Furthermore, the most commonly reported forms of bullying experienced by students were also witnessed by a relatively large proportion of the staff. These findings on the rates of indirect and verbal forms of bullying witnessed by staff suggest that the adults in the school may have greater exposure to these forms of bullying than previously speculated (Olweus, 1993).

Combined, the findings indicated both similarities and discrepancies between the pupils and staffs perceptions of bullying and peer victimization. They also indicated that while staff underestimated the frequency of bullying across all school levels, they were more cognizant of the most common locations and forms of bullying experienced by students. Bradshaw et al. (2007) conclude by stating that collecting data on bullying from both students and staff, and sharing this information broadly, may reduce these and other misperceptions regarding bullying and school violence (Bradshaw et al., 2006a, 2006b). Furthermore, staff members need increased opportunities for enhancing efficacy for handling bullying properly.

The Bradshaw et al. (2007) study underlines the differences that exist amongst pupils' and teachers' perceptions of bullying. Their findings are important to this study because they support the hypothesis that pupils and teachers have different perceptions of conflict. This is a significant finding; particularly as they go on to consider the significance of this divide when it comes to resolving bullying problems in schools. Although the Bradshaw et al. (2007) study focuses on bullying it is important to include because, like Boulton's study, it points out that more research needs to be done on pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict in secondary schools. It can also be noted that, similarly to Boulton's (1997) study, Bradshaw et al.'s (2007) study highlights the

possibility that less effective prevention efforts in secondary schools may be due to this lack of research on pupils' and teachers' perceptions of pupil conflicts.

2.6 Responses to conflict

According to Aldwin (2007), stress – defined as a person's physiological response to an internal or external stimulus that triggers the fight or flight response – includes techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with conflict. Stress management, then, is effective when a person uses strategies to cope with or alter stressful situations.

The fight or flight response was first described by Walter Bradford Cannon in 1929. His theory states that animals react to threats with a general discharge of the sympathetic nervous system, priming the animal for fighting or fleeing (Bracha, Ralston, Matsukawa & Williams, 2004). This response was later recognised as the first stage of a general adaptation syndrome that regulates stress responses among vertebrates and other organisms (Bracha et al., 2004).

Physiologists define stress as how the body reacts to a stressor, a real or imagined stimulus that causes an internal conflict (Selye, 1975). Acute stressors affect an organism in the short term; chronic stressors over the longer term. According to Selye (1975), individuals cope with stress in a three stage process. The first stage is labelled the 'Alarm' phase. In this phase, when the threat or stressor is identified or realised, the body's stress response is a state of alarm. During this stage adrenaline will be produced in order to bring about the flight or fight response. At this point, the individual will react to the change in hormone levels in the body and either flee the scene or face the conflict/stress head on. Selye (1975) argues that a certain predisposition, combined with external factors, motivates the individual to either flee or fight.

Lazarus (1966) argued that in order for a psychosocial situation to be stressful it must be appraised as stressful. He argued that cognitive processes of appraisal are integral in determining if a situation is potentially threatening, if it constitutes a conflict of harm or loss, or if it is not stressful. The primary appraisal includes the perception of

how stressful the problem is, realising that one has more than or less than adequate resources to deal with the problem affects the appraisal of the stressfulness. Lazarus went on to state that both personal and environmental factors influence this primary appraisal, which then triggers the selection of coping processes. Problem-focused coping is directed at managing the problem, while emotion-focused coping processes are directed at managing the negative emotions. If the situation persists a secondary appraisal may occur, whereby the individual re-evaluates the resources available to cope with the problem, and may alter the primary appraisal. Further, coping is flexible in that the individual generally examines the effectiveness of the coping situation. Lazarus (1966) contends that the individual is capable of changing their response to provide for a better result.

The second stage of Selye's (1975) process is called the 'Resistance' phase. If the stressor persists it becomes necessary to attempt some means of coping with the stress. The body will attempt to manage the strain of the stress; this cannot be kept up for long periods of time, however, as the body's resources gradually deplete. Responses to stress include adaptation, psychological coping such as stress management, anxiety and depression (Keil, 2004).

Weiten & Lloyd (2006) state that in coping with stress people tend to use one of the three main strategies: appraisal-focused, problem-focused or emotional-focused coping. Appraisal-focused strategies occur when a person changes the way they think, for example employing denial or distancing oneself from the problem. People may alter the way they think about a problem by altering their goals and values. Those who use problem-focused strategies try to deal with the cause of their problem. They do this by finding out information on the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. Emotion-focused strategies involve releasing pent-up emotions, distracting oneself, managing one's hostile feelings, and relaxation techniques.

Typically, people use a mixture of all three types of coping, and these skills will also change over time (Snyder, 1999). All these methods can prove useful but some claim that people using problem-focused coping strategies will adjust better to life (Taylor & Armour, 1996). Men often prefer problem-focused coping, whereas women can often tend towards an emotion-focused response. Problem-focused coping

mechanisms may allow an individual greater perceived control over their problem, while emotion-focused coping may more often lead to a reduction in perceived control (Snyder, 1999).

The use of less socially desirable tactics such as overt anger, avoidance, distraction and withdrawal are thought to be employed by adolescents more frequently than by young adults; this may be due to decreased self-control, increased peer influence, and an increased concern with the opposite sex associated with this stage of development (Feldman & Gowen,1998; Björkqvist et al., 1992; Lindeman et al., 1997; Gamble, 1994).

Laursen et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of peer conflict resolution that compared studies evaluating adolescents (ages 11-18) and young adults (ages 19-25). They found that researchers divided conflict resolution into compromise, third party intervention, withdrawal, standoff, and submission. These five elements could be combined into three categories: negotiation (compromise and third-party), disengagement (withdrawal and standoff), and coercion (submission). Adolescents used disengagement most and negotiation least, while young adults used negotiation most and coercion least.

In addition to age and gender differences found in conflict resolution tactics, there are other influences on the choice of tactics, including the type of relationship requiring resolution and whether or not the conflict studied is hypothetical or real. Voluntary relationships, such as those between romantic partners and friends, are more conducive to negotiation tactics, while coercion is used more for sibling and acquaintance relationships (Laursen et al., 2001). Laursen also found that negotiation was preferred more in hypothetical conflict scenarios, while coercion was used more in actual conflicts. This disparity may be due to the social desirability of certain tactics such as compromise and negotiation, making these tactics what most people would like to use even if, in reality, other methods of resolution are employed.

The final stage of Selye's (1975) process is the 'Exhaustion' stage. According to Selye, at this point all of the resources are depleted and the body is unable to maintain normal function. The initial autonomic nervous system symptoms may reappear. If

stage three is extended long term damage may result, as the body and the immune system are exhausted and function is impaired. The result can manifest itself in obvious illnesses such as ulcers, depression, diabetes and troubles with the digestive system or cardiovascular and mental illness. Therefore, it is imperative for the well-being of the individual to ensure that wherever possible the 'Exhaustion' phase is not reached. The teaching of proper stress/conflict management to individuals is essential to protect against the detriment of prolonged exposure to conflict/stress.

2.6.1 An overview of school-based responses to conflict

Conflict resolution programmes can be implemented in a number of ways, and existing programmes vary considerably across schools and districts (Bodine, Crawford, & Schrumpf, 1994). This variation highlights the importance of selecting appropriate content and methods of delivery that best meet the needs and expectations of individual communities, schools or districts (Bodine et al., 1994).

According to Bodine et al. (1994), the most effective school-based conflict resolution programmes are comprehensive in that they include multiple programme components. The recommended components of comprehensive programmes include (1) Building a peaceable climate, (2) Understanding conflict, (3) Understanding peace and peacemaking, (4) Mediation, (5) Negotiation, and (6) Group problem solving. These multiple-component comprehensive programmes may also be called "school-wide programmes" or "peaceable school programmes." Schools often begin by instituting one component then building other components around it to establish a comprehensive programme.

In some schools conflict resolution is integrated into the school-wide instructional and behaviour management systems; in others, the conflict resolution strategies are presented as a separate programme, with a specialized curriculum and activities. There are numerous opportunities for including conflict resolution programme components in schools, including integration through the academic or the elective curriculum, citizenship and law studies, peer education classes, educational reform efforts, multicultural education, school safety and violence prevention efforts, anger management programmes, classroom management strategies, school-wide

discipline policies and procedures, and cooperative learning and critical thinking strategies.

The implementation of a truly comprehensive school-based conflict resolution programme requires school-wide reinforcement of conflict resolution theory and practice and changes in the behaviour management systems of the school (Bodine at al., 1994). Moreover, as the conflict resolution programme develops, the school community will need to address specific elements of policies and procedures and alter them to support the use of conflict resolution theory and skills. Often school behaviour management systems are based on punishment rather than self-discipline. Implementing conflict resolution strategies encourages people to talk about their interests and needs and to work collaboratively to find solutions. This shift to conflict resolution concepts supports student compliance without external coercion and promotes the development of disciplined individuals who are internally motivated to comply with behaviour expectations (Bodine et al., 1994).

Transforming district and school discipline policies to reflect conflict resolution theory allows educators to model an orderly, productive system accomplished through cooperation; the discipline system itself then becomes an integral part of the educational programme. The transformation to a peaceful school takes place in stages, with elements of systemic change occurring as the programme components are implemented and as adults and students incorporate conflict resolution practices into their daily interactions (Bodine at al., 1994). At each stage of programme implementation school policies and behaviour management systems should be reviewed and altered as necessary.

Bodine et al., (1994), go on to argue that conflict transformation and conflict resolution work in conjunction with conflict prevention. While prevention entails maintaining peace before and after violence/anti-social behaviour by correctly interpreting and acting upon early warning signs, conflict transformation involves shifting existing violence into constructive dialogue. Non-violent modes of conflict resolution can then be applied to achieve peace and prevent future conflicts through the use of early warning systems.

2.6.2 Arguments against the effectiveness of conflict resolution programmes

Daniel Webster (1993) is sceptical about the effectiveness of conflict resolution programmes. He says,

"…I am sceptical that existing conflict resolution programmes can reduce interpersonal violence, for the following reasons: (1) There is no evidence that such programmes produce long-term changes in violent behaviour or risk of victimization; (2) in the absence of other supporting interventions, classroom-based curricula generally have failed to produce sustainable behaviour changes for other health and social problems among youth; (3) the assumptions regarding conflict resolution programmes and violence are questionable; and (4) the programmes provide political cover for politicians, bureaucrats, and school officials and distract the public from the structural determinants of youth violence" (p. 126).

Webster makes a number of recommendations for altering the focus of conflict resolution programmes. For example, he says that government agencies and foundations interested in adolescent conflict resolution as a strategy to reduce youth violence should fund long-term evaluations with sufficient sample size and follow-up time to detect possible changes in perpetration and victimization involving serious injuries. While plenty of resources are being devoted to delivering adolescent conflict resolution programmes, no one has been willing to invest in long-term evaluations that will tell us whether those resources are being well spent.

Webster (1993) goes on to argue for the restructuring of programme content. Behaviourally oriented youth violence prevention programmes should: address known risk factors consistent with the developmental stage of the target audience; include training on how to handle put-downs and de-escalate volatile situations; and include training in street survival skills. Furthermore, adolescent programmes then should focus on problems of school failure; the absence of attachments to positive adult role models; the lack of supervised recreational opportunities; and allegiances with antisocial peer groups. Programmes that focus on enhancing social information-processing skills and other social skills should be targeted towards children age from 4 to 9 years.

Webster (1993) also contends that better formative research into the situations that spark violent/anti-social encounters involving youth is needed to ensure that youth violence/anti-social behaviour prevention programmes prepare adolescents to avoid or respond appropriately to potentially violent/anti-social situations. Currently there is

convincing evidence that status attacks and macho posturing are more common precursors to violence than situations that would usually call for negotiation skills (Webster, 1993). No curriculum can alter the root causes of often deadly battles over respect, but students may benefit from being taught ways of handling perceived put-downs or insults non-violently without losing face. The efficacy of such teaching could hinge on the implementation of programmes and policies that offer real opportunities to build self-esteem and of peer-led programmes to promote non-violent social norms for responding to status attacks.

Teaching adolescents non-violent street survival skills is an untested strategy that warrants evaluation. Schools and educational curricula are generally best suited to imparting information that is useful to students. They are generally less proficient at teaching relatively complicated social skills and promoting values such as non-violence (Webster, 1993). Adolescents growing up in high-crime areas are very concerned about predatory crime and need information about how to avoid being victimized and how to avoid being seriously hurt if they are victimized. Safety tips that students consider useful, delivered by credible sources, would be more likely to stick with them than would more complicated social skills or attitudes about violence that are not shared in their homes and communities.

Webster (1993) suggests intensifying and broadening interventions. Brief interventions that are not reinforced outside the immediate training environment cannot be expected to alter difficult-to-change behaviour. Students must practice the social skills they are taught in situations that are as realistic as possible, and the acquired behaviour patterns must be reinforced over time and across settings. Programmes that fail often do so because of inadequate consideration of, and control over, the ecological context in which violent/anti-social behaviour is learned and reinforced. Intensive, comprehensive, and long-lasting interventions with young children are expensive and unlikely to produce immediate reductions in violence, but they have a much greater likelihood of producing significant and lasting behaviour change than do current adolescent conflict resolution programmes.

Schools' efforts to prevent youth violence have traditionally focused on controlling students' behaviour (Webster, 1993). While behaviour must be controlled,

school officials should focus on ways in which school environments and policies might either contribute to or prevent violence and anti-social behaviour. In the long term schools should adopt policies to reduce school failure, which places young people at increased risk of becoming involved in crime and violence. Such policy changes might include making schools smaller, curtailing ability tracking and grade retention, providing high-risk students with individualized attention and instruction, assigning teachers to cohorts of students rather than to specific grades, and linking academic learning with vocational learning and opportunities. Some school improvements require increased funding for schools in poor communities. The public needs to be taught that investments in schools, when properly managed, are investments in crime prevention (Webster, 1993).

Traditional prevention mechanisms have proved top-heavy and ineffective in addressing the root causes of conflict and problems leading to the escalation of tensions. It is not surprising, then, that young people have taken on active roles and created youth networks to try to build peace and prevent outbreaks of violence.

2.6.3 Practical applications of conflict resolution policy

The curriculum component of a conflict resolution programme provides the foundation for creating a peaceful and safe school environment and ensures that all students gain the skills and knowledge to respond constructively to conflict. Ideally, all students in the school learn the skills necessary to resolve conflict peacefully (Camodeca, Goossens, Schuengel & Terwogt, 2003).

The conflict resolution curriculum may be purchased as a whole, developed locally, or adapted from a variety of sources to meet local needs (Camodeca et al., 2003). According to Camodeca et al. (2003), the curriculum should provide research-based, developmentally appropriate materials and activities that present concrete strategies for dealing with conflict in a positive manner. This, they say, includes lessons with a variety of activities, including real-life scenarios for role play, interviews, group dialogue, brainstorming, and other experiential learning strategies requiring student participation and interaction.

Camodeca et al. (2003) also state that these lessons should also include structured, specific instruction and practice regarding the problem-solving skills of negotiation, mediation and consensus decision making. They also feel that these lessons should define conflict; provide information about how conflicts arise from a clash of needs, drives, wishes or demands; depict conflict itself as neither positive nor negative; and explain conflict as a normal part of life. Such lessons should also teach that the thoughtful resolution of conflicts can be achieved and that win-win solutions can be reached. They should create understanding of common values, beliefs, and attitudes including non-violence, compassion, empathy, fairness, trust, justice, respect for self and others, and appreciation of diversity.

Camodeca et al. (2003) further state that such programmes should provide opportunities to practice empathy; to self-evaluate; review personal biases and suspend judgment; provide opportunities to practice communicating emotions effectively; express emotions in non-aggressive, non-inflammatory ways; and exercise self-control. Opportunities should also be provided to practice active listening skills, effective speaking skills and the use of neutral, less emotional terms to facilitate negotiation and allow for creativity and innovation in solving problems and making decisions. These lessons should also help develop critical thinking skills by providing opportunities to recognize accepted criteria for behaviour and apply established criteria as the basis for choosing options and planning future behaviours; address the basic underlying concepts of conflict resolution, including separating the people from the problem; focusing on interests, not positions; creating options so everyone wins; and using accepted fair standards and fair procedures (Camodeca et al., 2003).

2.6.4 Pastoral view of educational conflict policy

The faith group, the Quakers, are deeply committed to the creation of educational programmes and practices dealing with the peaceful resolution of conflict. The Quakers' example is one of many attempts by different faith groups to initiate conflict management policies in education. The aims of these programmes are to empower children to think for themselves and to show them that, while conflict is a natural part of life, managing it peacefully is very much possible (www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education, 2009).

The Quakers have worked towards implementing these policies via Peace Education, which comprises two inter-related strands. One is Education for Peace, which examines the nature of conflict and non-violent methods for dealing with conflict with children and young people, as well as teaching them the skills required to deal with conflict in their own lives. The other is Education about Peace which challenges widely held views and assumptions in society, as well as exploring topics such as positive and negative peace, conscientious objection, and non-violent direct action. The Quakers work "to show people that conflict in itself is natural and unavoidable, but that it can be resolved peacefully, the context and environment in which a child is educated is as important as the lesson content" (www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education,2009).

Peace Education has been implemented by the Quakers through the use of the Peace Education Advisory Programme (PEAP), which aims to challenge prevailing attitudes through education about peace and to provide practical experiences of education for peace through work in schools by providing resources for teachers and working closely with various national networks. The programme consists of teaching pupils about exploring the issues of war, disarmament, conscientious objection, human rights, citizenship and social justice and challenging widely held assumptions. Child-centred and participatory methods of learning, such as circle time, are well-suited teaching methods for educating for peace. Through project work, alone or in groups, children can explore the issues and problems that are important to them. This can help them to begin to make sense, and develop creative ways, of responding to the world around them (www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education, 2009).

2.7 Conclusion

The main point to take away from the literature review is that it is sparse with references to definitions and responses relating directly to conflict in secondary schools. Moreover, there is no agreed definition of conflict or a specific theory that permeates the education system in England or Denmark. Therefore, the results of this study will add to an area which seems to be almost uncharted and is therefore underrepresented in the literature.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Research Design

3.0 Introduction

This chapter opens with a discussion on the epistemology underlying the thesis, to show how the methodology chosen and employed was appropriate for the study. This chapter also discusses the research design and research instruments applied in the research project. More specifically, it discusses the research approaches applied, including their strengths and limitations, and justifies their use in the study. This is followed by a discussion of the individual cases and samples in this study and the criteria by which they were chosen. A brief explanation will be given of how the questionnaires were constructed and the pilot studies carried out to test the effectiveness of the questionnaires; a brief summary of each pilot study will be given. This is then followed by a timeline to show the chronological sequence of the research process. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the specific ethical considerations involved in undertaking the research.

3.1 Epistemology

Because the focus of this study was on the complex topic of perceptions of conflict, a complex interpretive philosophy was needed to capture the nature of the study and to respond to the research questions. However, before discussing the selected epistemology selected it is important to mention the other approaches available and why they were not suitable for this particular study. Upon conducting a literature search, three main epistemological perspectives were identified: positivism, critical theory and interpretive theory. These three theories will now be discussed.

According to Gall, Gall & Borg (1999), when it comes to epistemology there is a significant difference between the qualitative and quantitative approach, in that qualitative research takes an interpretive approach and quantitative research takes a positivist approach, which uses preconceived notions to collect data. Similarly, Kaplan

& Maxwell (1994) state that the positivist approach seeks to examine the 'universal' by applying the scientific method to gain objective knowledge, and that this is done through theory testing by predetermining variables and by attempting to quantify measure and draw inferences for generalizations.

Similarly, Epstein (2008) commenting on epistemology in comparative education, concludes that:

> *"… For positivists, generalisation is in terms of universal relationships between education and other social institutions by means of cross-national sampling of populations, often using statistical inference. By contrast, interpretivists generalise about how education is tied to the national character of particular populations without inference to other populations" (p. 383).*

Epstein (2008), therefore, makes a distinction between the positivist and interpretive paradigms and states that they differ greatly in their approach to generalizing, where one approach does inter (positivist) generalizing and the other, intra (interpretive) generalization.

The aim of positivistic theory contrasts with the aim of the current research, which focussed on and welcomed the full complexity of human sense-making as the situations emerged, rather than manipulating or predetermining variables. Moreover, because the aim of the study was to understand conflict within individual cases, and not through generalizations, I did not find the positivist approach suitable for my particular study. In summary, I was interested in examining the particular, as opposed the universal.

The second approach identified in the literature was critical theory. According to critical theory, social reality is historically made and is produced and reproduced by people. The expressed intention is deliberately political, focusing on the emancipation of individuals and groups in an egalitarian society. It is explicitly prescriptive and normative, entailing a view of what behaviour in a social democracy should entail. Its purpose is not solely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them (Horkeimer, 1993). Second, the main task of critical research is social critique, where the restrictive and alienating conditions of the *status quo* are brought to light. Critical research focuses on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary

society, and seeks to be emancipatory (Ngwenyama & Lee, 1997; Hirschheim & Klein, 1994). Although, like critical research, I was interested in the conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, I was not interested in doing it through social critique in search of social truth, through facts, or to highlight the restrictive and alienating conditions of the *status quo*. Nor was I interested in changing situations or challenging the political norm. Thus, for these reasons my study did not take a critical theorist's viewpoint.

Consideration of the positivist and critical theory paradigms helped narrow down the epistemological philosophy of this research to the interpretive. According to Orlikowski & Baroudi (1991) the interpretive paradigm strives to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors, emphasizing on meanings and interpretations of the stakeholders as being paramount. They contend that in order to better understand particular cases the individual's perceptions are needed. Because I wanted to establish a channel for the student participants to communicate their experiences openly and in a free context, and because I wanted to hear from the students directly with respect to themselves and their experiences with conflict in their schools, I felt that an interpretive perspective was appropriate for this study.

Another reason for adopting an interpretive approach was because I wanted to examine and understand conflict from individual situated perceptions; through the meanings assigned to these perceptions by participants, as opposed to researchers and policymakers. Walsham (1993) highlights some benefits of applying the interpretive method. He argues that the interpretive paradigm is "aimed at producing an understanding of the context of the information system, and the process whereby the information system influences and is influenced by the context" (pp. 4-5). He also notes that, unlike the critical theory paradigm, interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

3.2 Methodology

The word "methodological" comprises two separate elements, "method" and "logical". The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the word "method" as "a

procedure, technique, or way of doing something" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/method, 2008), and the word "logical" is defined as "reasoning in accordance with the principles of logic, as a person or the mind: logical thinking". (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/logical, 2008). Thus, the two elements added together give the word "methodological," which means, "the systematic study of methods that are, can be, or have been applied within a discipline" (http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/webster.htm, 2008).

Thus, from the above definition of "methodological" we can take the word to mean the most logical, best suited method applied within a research discipline; indicating that different disciplines will require different methods. In line with this definition, this research applied methods that best suited it. They will be discussed below.

3.2.1 A comparative approach

This thesis took a comparative approach since it not only investigated perceptions of, and responses to, conflict within two secondary schools in one country but also cross-nationally, across four schools in two different countries. It was felt that the comparison of perceptions and responses to conflict in the educational systems of two culturally and socially differing countries would yield interesting data, including similarities, differences and a deeper understanding of the individual educational systems; inevitably, this involved elements of comparative research. Moreover, applying a comparative approach in this study was beneficial, especially cross-nationally, because it allowed comparison to take place from an international angle (Phillips, 1999).

3.2.2 Benefits of the comparative approach

According to Michael Crossley (2000), globalisation has brought the world closer together in terms of socio-economic paradigms, bringing about a 'global village'. He suggests that, "globalization has infused the ever present need to learn about each other with an urgency and emphasis like no other in history" (p. 319). This

interconnectivity of socio-economic paradigms, therefore, sets the stage for interesting and valuable research.

Similarly, Epstein (2008) defines comparative education as "the application of the intellectual tools of history and the social sciences to understanding international issues of education" (p. 373). Epstein's definition of comparative education highlights the need to expand the understanding of education and educational issues to wider contexts. This point supports the idea that in order to better understand the nuances of one system, it is best to examine it in juxtaposition to the practices of another system in another country.

Likewise, Crossley & Broadfoot (1992) highlight the importance of comparative education. They state that comparative education can help identify and analyse similarities and differences in educational institutions. They further contended that comparative education may help the future development of educational policy and practice, and help towards a better understanding of the nature of the connection between education and social context. Similarly, Gregory Fairbrother (2005), comments on the benefits of comparative education:

"Among the purposes of comparative education are understanding our own and other countries' educational systems; improving, developing, and reforming educational systems, policy, and practice; predicting the success and consequences of educational change; and developing tools to aid in each of these endeavours through the construction of theoretical frameworks" (p. 6).

Udo Schaefer (1983) states that the comparative approach is also helpful in understanding perceptions. According to Schaefer (1983) culture, education and training all play a role in perception; he contends that "a large body of scholars is of the opinion that variations among minds and differing degrees of perception are due to differences in education, training and culture" (p. 161).

Thus, my study took a comparative approach because I wanted to gain a more well-rounded understanding of my research topic, while having a larger framework to work with. A comparative angle will help identify similarities and differences in perceptions of conflict within two contrasting countries, whilst also deepening my own understanding of the topic.

3.2.3 Limitations of the comparative approach

It is important to recognize that although there are several benefits to conducting a comparative analysis, there are also drawbacks. Crossley & Broadfoot (1992) identify some of these limitations: the danger of making false comparisons; difficulties in collecting valid and comparable data for analysis; and the danger of ethnocentric bias in the interpretation of findings. Such potential dangers can be combined with the difficulties of establishing cultural and contextual sensitivity, where world views and languages used may differ significantly; having different sample sizes; and language barriers, all of which have long been known to act as limitations to comparative studies (Lisle, 1985).

I took several measures to address some of the limitations mentioned above, starting with the selection of the countries. I selected two countries whose languages I was fluent in, whose cultures I was familiar with and whose educational systems I had studied in. These factors aided me to gain access to the schools and allowed me to better understand the behaviours of the participants. The two countries chosen for comparison were England and Denmark. These two countries have different educational systems and cultures. These two factors offered interesting contrasts for closer examination and comparison.

Another motivator for selecting Denmark for comparison with England was the worrying results of a recent Unicef survey, which compared the overall well-being of youth in 21 developed countries, including England and Denmark. One of the categories measured under the dimension of 'educational well-being' was the quality of peer relationships. According to the report the UK, including England, was at the foot of the rankings in most categories. When specifically asked whether pupils found their peers to be generally kind and helpful, it was significant that 72% of pupils in Denmark said yes, while only 42% of pupils in the UK said yes. This was concerning, especially when coupled by this statement by the World Health Organization (WHO):

"Being liked and accepted by peers is crucial to young people's health and development and those who are not socially integrated are far more likely exhibit difficulties with their physical and emotional health" (Unicef Report Card 7, 2007, p. 27).

Language did not act as a barrier in this study as I have a sound knowledge of both English and Danish. I grew up in Denmark and attended school there till I was in year 6. English is my second language. I have been practising it since I was in year 7, as I attended secondary school in an English speaking country. Thirdly, linguistic checks were carried out throughout the research by a Danish friend who is a native speaker, and who helped translate the questionnaires from English to Danish, and then back to English again. Finally, an English-Danish, Danish-English dictionary was used for additional assistance. The questionnaires were also given to Danish teachers at a pilot study, to confirm that the translation was correct.

3.2.4 Case study

A case study approach was chosen as the research method for this study because I wanted to understand individual perceptions of conflict within individual situated social contexts. However before I explain why I selected the case study approach, the case study approach will be defined and its purposes discussed.

Polit & Hungler (1983) define case studies as detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. Similarly, Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg (1991) state that a case study is an ideal methodology when a 'holistic, in-depth investigation is needed'. Yin (1994) also defines a study as an 'in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single 'instance' or 'event', which focuses on a bounded system, usually under natural conditions, so that the system can be understood in its own habitat (Stake, 1995). Similarly, Darke, Broadbent & Broadbent (1998) point out that, for studying a contemporary situation in its real-life context, a case study is an appropriate research strategy. Amongst the purposes of case studies is the analysis of variables relevant to the subject under study (Polit & Hungler, 1983).

Thus, when exploring the perceptions of conflict in English and Danish schools, stakeholders may have their own way of understanding conflict, and their approaches to managing conflict may vary. A case study can allow a researcher to gain more insight into both the differences and the similarities of each case. In addition, Feagin et al. (1991) point out that case studies are multi-perspective analyses, meaning that the researcher does not consider the voice and perspective of only one person or group, but

that of all parties involved, and the interaction between them. Moreover, because the research was intended to seek an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions of conflict, the case study method allowed the investigation of pupil and teacher perceptions of, and responses to, conflict in a real-life context; in turn this allowed a more in-depth and real understanding of the differences and the similarities in perceptions of conflict both within and across different cases.

3.2.5 Multiple case study approach

While the case study is an appropriate method for studying individual cases, it contributes to the understanding of a single case/situation. However, since my study consisted of more than one case (four schools), it was a multiple case study. Having several case studies was instrumental in understanding a large issue, such as conflict. According to Stake (1998),the collective case study approach involves the study of similar events in a number of different locations, in order to gain a greater perspective of the phenomena under study. Stake (1995) also notes that multiple case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants, by using several sources of data. Since the proposed study investigated two cases within each country, the collective case study was an appropriate research design.

Having discussed some of the advantages of case studies, it is also important to highlight some of the limitations, which include:

- The researcher may become involved in the issues, events or situations under study;
- Problems stemming from competition from different interest groups for access to, and control over the data;
- Problems concerning publication, such as the need to preserve anonymity of subjects;
- Problems arising from the audience being unable to distinguish data from the researcher's interpretations of the data. (Walker, 1983).

In order to minimize the issues that could arise with case study research, the following were included in the research design:

- Triangulation of methods, data sources, and theories;
- Reflexive subjectivity (some documentation of how the researcher's assumptions have been affected by the logic of the data);
- Face validity allowed categories to emerge from the data, as opposed to pre-setting categories. (Lather, 1986, p. 78).

3.3 Research design - triangulation/mixed methods approach

In social research there are two major designs that researchers tend to choose from: quantitative or qualitative. However, some researchers argue that borrowing elements from both methods gives a more well-rounded, holistic and valid approach. One such researcher is Richard Pring (2002), who argues that there is a false dualism in social research that rejects the use of both the qualitative and quantitative methods. He contends that educational research can benefit greatly from the mixing of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and he warns researchers about the dangers of restricting themselves to just one method, contending that:

"The tendency to dichotomise in this way in understandable but misleading … by emphasizing one particular distinction, it obscures or eliminates other, more subtle ones" (p. 248).

Pring (2002) concludes that researchers can benefit greatly from combining qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data. He states that "The qualitative investigation can clear the ground for the quantitative and the quantitative can be suggestive of differences to be explored in a more interpretive mode" (p. 259). Similarly, Fairbrother (2007) as observes:

"Among the many approaches to research, a broad classification distinguishes between the quantitative and the qualitative. Boundaries may be difficult to determine, and the approaches may not be mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the two approaches deserve focus because they permit different types of insights" (p. 39).

Both Pring (2000) and Fairbrother (2007) above argue that the line between qualitative and quantitative research is not clear. They, along with other researchers (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Newman & Benz, 1998), contend that by drawing from different sources researchers can allow more vigorous, overarching interpretive aspirations, and gain a better overall understanding of the use of individual methods through different means,

thereby not limiting themselves to just one method (i.e. questionnaires). By relying on several different methods a weakness in one method could be avoided, or limited, by using a second method.

The method referred to above is "triangulation", also known as the "mixed/multi-methods" approach (Bryman, 2008). The idea behind triangulation is to apply two or more different methods to assess the agreement of results; if the outcomes produce consistent results, then the researcher can be confident that the findings are valid. Moreover, the more the methods contrast, the greater the validity will be. Validity refers to the extent to which one's findings are truly representative of phenomena they are claiming to measure (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Bryman, 2008). In order to increase the validity of the current study triangulation was applied, using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. These measures included: questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and documentation (presented in order of execution). These methods will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

Triangulation was also used in this research because I wanted to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour; studying it from more than one angle would provide different sources to draw from in order to get more rigorous data, which is why the mixed methods in this study consisted of four different instruments for the collection and analysis of data. Finally, triangulation is often the approach taken for collecting data in case studies. More specifically, Bryman (2008) argues "case studies are frequently the sites for the employment of both qualitative and quantitative research" (p. 53).

It is important to note, however, that although this study applied a mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data the nature of the research remained qualitative, in that it took a "bottom-up" approach to examining perceptions and responses to conflict. This is in contrast to the quantitative method which uses a "top-down" approach. According to Gall et al. (1999), one major difference between the qualitative and quantitative approaches is that the quantitative approach uses theories at the onset of the data collection, whereas the qualitative approach allows for categories to emerge from the data, and the theorising is done at the last stage as a result of the

data, an approach suitable for a study that sought the perceptions of participants, phenomena that are not tangible nor can be measured scientifically.

3.3.1 Benefits of the mixed methods approach

Triangulation strengthens the reliability (the quality of measurement) of one's study. A measure is considered reliable if it will give the same result over and over again. One way that I increased the reliability of this study was to give my supervisor samples of data from different instruments and ask him to interpret them separately, to see whether we got similar responses. Another way reliability was sought in this study was by reviewing my own subjective thoughts that were documented in a journal during observations and ensuring that they were kept separate from the actual facts. This way, I ensured that my interpretations were not based on my own subjective notions of the data, but from the actual source, the participants.

In terms of external validity, since this research was qualitative in nature, I was not concerned with generalizing my findings (a characteristic of quantitative research), and as such, external validity was of limited importance in this study, and therefore will not be discussed.

3.3.2 Limitations of the mixed methods approach

Having discussed the benefits of applying a mixed methods approach it is also important to mention some of its limitations. A major drawback of the multiple case study design is its limited ability to generalize. Because the intention of this study was not to generalize its findings to the population at large, and because I did not want to lose sight of the particularity that was unique to each individual case, this limitation was dealt with by commenting on ways in which the particular within each case was similar to the particular in another case. These four cases were then generalised amongst themselves rather than to the population at large.

3.4 Research instruments

Due to the sensitive nature of the research (dealing with perceptions), and because specific research questions that were sensitive in nature were examined (e.g. Do you self-harm?), instruments were required that would aid the researcher to grasp a deeper understanding of what was being studied, and that would best answer the proposed research questions. After careful consideration of the most appropriate methods, the following four methods were selected: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observations and documentation.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

The teacher and pupil questionnaires used in the current research were similar in that both sought participants' perceptions of pupil conflict. Both the pupil and teacher questionnaires consisted of a mixture of scaled, open-ended, and closed questions. However, the teacher questionnaires differed slightly in wording to focus on their perceptions of and responses to pupil conflicts. The pupil questionnaires had an added sentence completion section for their responses to conflict. Both questionnaires included items on perceptions of conflict, responses to conflict, participants' understanding of their role in managing conflicting situations and their evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes and policies within their schools. The purpose of both the teacher and pupil questionnaires was to assess how subjects perceived and responded to pupil conflict. Since participants' perceptions of, and responses to pupil conflict was sought, no attempt was made to generate a clear definition of conflict at the outset. Rather, open-ended questions were asked on questions seeking pupils' and teachers' perceptions and responses to conflict, such as "what does conflict mean to you?" and "most conflicts can be resolved by…"

Because this study sought perceptions from pupils aged 11-16 and because the school systems in England and Denmark differ slightly, the researcher was not able to compare data based on year groups, but rather comparisons were made based on age. For example in England pupils start secondary school in year 7, where most pupils are 11 years old, whereas most 11 year old pupils in Denmark are in year 5. Therefore in

England the pupil questionnaires were distributed to pupils in years 7-11, whereas in Denmark they were distributed to pupils in years 5-9.

A total of 400 pupil questionnaires and 60 teacher questionnaires were distributed. However, due to some questionnaires being incomplete, not filled in at all or not handed back, 53 pupil and 26 teacher questionnaires were discarded, therefore a total of 347 pupil and 34 teacher questionnaires were used in this study. Within Denmark a total of 149 pupil questionnaires and 11 teacher questionnaires were completed, and in England there were a total of 198 pupil questionnaires and 23 teacher questionnaires. When broken down further, by school, there were 91 pupil questionnaires from Edward Elgar (E1), 107 from Charles Dickens, 80 from Hans Christian Andersen (D1) and 69 from Frederik Nielsen (D2). As for the teacher questionnaires there was a total of 14 from Charles Dickens, 9 from Edward Elgar, 6 from Hans Christian Andersen and 5 from Frederik Nielsen.

I started my data collection with questionnaires because they are a useful method of data collection when wanting to investigate opinion-based data (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Munn & Drever, 1999). Because I wanted to examine pupil and teacher perceptions of, and responses to conflict, this approach seemed appropriate. Moreover, because my study consisted of more than one method of data collection, the questionnaires acted as primary sources of data collection to gain an overall picture of pupil and teacher perceptions of, and responses to conflict, as well as to tap people's attitudes and reports of their behaviour. Cohen et al., (2007), state that there is a general rule of thumb for the creation of questionnaires. They state that, "the larger the sample size, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire may be" (p. 320). Because I was seeking 'rich and personal' data from the perspectives of the participants, the majority of the questions were open-ended and word-based, in order to gain a more accurate depiction of the perceptions of and responses to conflict from the participants themselves.

3.4.2 Advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires

Open-ended questions were advantageous for my research because they allowed the participants to write a free account of their experiences based on their own perceptions. They also allowed them to explain and qualify their responses which, in turn, confined the limitations of pre-set categories of responses (Bryman, 2008).

One of the disadvantages of open-ended questions in this study was that some questions were not answered and there were some irrelevant and redundant responses. It could have been the case that some of the questions were so broad the participants did not know what kind of information was wanted of them. The feedback received from the pupil pilot study in England was that the questions were comprehensible and that the pupils understood the types of information required from them. Yet during the actual fieldwork, apart from the incomplete questionnaires that were omitted, some of the open-ended questions were not answered, and a few were question marked. This could indicate that the students either did not understand those question(s), that they did not want to answer the questions, or that they did not feel comfortable answering them.

However, there was also the issue of not being in the classrooms while the pupil questionnaires were distributed, and thus not knowing the actual amount of time allotted for the pupils to complete the questionnaires (even though I requested a full lesson). Therefore, it is important to note that the pupils may have experienced a time constraint which could have accounted for some of the blank, incomplete, questioned marked or even superficial responses. Additionally, according to Munn et al. (1999), the common mistake of asking too many questions should also be avoided. The questionnaires for my research consisted of 48 questionnaire items. Although this was not mentioned as a problem during the pilot, it could have been that due to time constraints it became an issue during the actual fieldwork, and may have contributed to the participants' lack of willingness to answer some of the questions, possibly because they felt that the questionnaires were too lengthy and tiresome (Cohen et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, attempts were made to prevent the large amounts of data that open-ended questions can generate and process by limiting the space available for responses to just four lines per open-ended question (Munn et al., 1999). Moreover, if I

had more time within the individual schools, a focus group would perhaps have allowed me to investigate the reasons why some of the open-ended questions were left blank or question marked.

The questionnaires also contained closed questions, the advantages of which, in my particular study, was that they were quick to complete and straightforward to code (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). However, the disadvantage of closed questions in my particular study was that they did not allow the pupils and teachers to add any remarks, qualifications and explanations to the categories. Secondly, there was the risk that the categories for the closed questions were biased and not exhaustive enough; if so, these weaknesses could decrease the validity and reliability of my questionnaires (Bogdan & Biklen,1998).

3.4.3 Administration of questionnaires

The teachers distributed the pupil questionnaires during class lessons. The teacher questionnaires were filled out either during the same lesson or in their spare time. In England the pupil questionnaires were handed out during PSHE lessons and in Denmark, during *Klassens Time*. In both England and Denmark teachers were guided on how to instruct the pupils on filling out the questionnaires. Pupils were told that if they did not want to fill out the questionnaires, they did not have to and that if at any point during the questionnaire they wanted to stop, they could. Pupils were given a full lesson to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were conducted like a test, where pupils were not allowed to talk to one another; if they had any questions for the teachers, they were instructed to raise their hands.

3.4.4 Interviews

Interviews are an essential means for collecting data in qualitative studies (Yin, 1994). Therefore I thought it pertinent to use interviews as a means of data collection in this study. The aim of the interviews in this study was threefold. Firstly, they were to be used in conjunction with other methods for validation (methodological triangulation). Secondly, they were used in order to get a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions of, and responses to conflict. Finally, interviews were used to follow up on

the questionnaires for a deeper look into the motivations behind participants' responses (Cohen et al., 2007). This was achieved by cross-referencing the interview responses with the questionnaire responses to see whether the same or similar responses were given (Cohen et al., 2007; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

There were a total of 66 interviews conducted in the course of this study, 31 of which were teacher interviews and 35 pupil interviews. Out of the 31 teacher interviewees, 20 were from England and 11 were from Denmark. As for the pupils, 18 interviewees were from England and 17 were from Denmark. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and the pupil participants were selected based on teachers choosing at least one pupil in each year grade. Pupils were interviewed on a voluntary basis in that they were first approached and asked by their teachers if they wanted to participate in the interview. If they agreed, a letter of consent was given to the pupils to take home, outlining the intended the interview process, to be signed by the pupils' parents. Once consent was given, pupils were interviewed. The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes each. The shortest interview was with a pupil and lasted only 15 minutes. The longest interview was with a teacher, taking nearly an hour and a half. Once completed, both the English and Danish interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy.

On the basis of the literature, three types of interview structures were identified: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (also known as 'in-depth' interviews). A structured interview is a quantitative research method commonly employed in survey research. The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interviewee is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This is one way to ensure that answers can be reliably tallied and that comparisons can be made between sample subgroups or between different survey periods (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007). While structured interviews use a set of questions that are asked in the same order of all respondents, the semi-structured interview method is used to collect qualitative data by setting up an interview that allows a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject.

With the semi-structured interview the researcher decides the focus of the interview and, even though the researcher has a set of questions, they may change the

order, and allow people to deviate from a straight answer, and give them space to add, develop, and raise something related but new (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007). Finally, an unstructured interview is a qualitative research method used to gather ideas, information, and to develop materials for intervention. What is meant by unstructured is that there is no particular structure or set of questions that the researcher (interviewer) follows. Moreover, in unstructured interviews the interviewer interjects less, or may ask things that they did not plan but that may have arisen during the interview. This limitation in structure allows the interviewer to encourage the participant to talk at length about the topic of interest. It aims to ask questions to explain the reasons underlying a problem or practice in a target group. It can lead to increased insight into people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour on important issues (Bryman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007).

3.4.5 Benefits of semi-structured interviews

Having considered the different types of interview schemes I opted for a semi-structured interview method, both because it seemed to be the least intrusive to the participants and because it encouraged two-way communication (Powney & Watts, 1987). Moreover the semi-structured interview allowed me to build a rapport with the participants, which in turn allowed a fairly open framework for focused, conversational, two-way communication. It was important for me to build a rapport with my participants and to make them feel safe to speak their minds as I was dealing with a sensitive topic**.**

The interviews were conducted face-to-face. The major advantage of face-to-face interviews was that non-verbal behaviour could be observed. Also, the likelihood of the participants feeling more comfortable answering the questions face-to-face seemed greater, because they could put a face to the researcher’s voice, which in turn would make them feel more at ease when answering the questions (Powney & Watts, 1987).

3.4.6 Limitations of semi-structured interviews

Although there are many benefits to using semi-structured interviews it is equally important to mention their drawbacks. Some of the drawbacks include: asking leading questions; failure to listen closely; repeating questions that have already been asked; failure to probe when necessary; failure to judge the answers; and asking vague or insensitive questions (Cohen et al., 2007). However, in order to deal effectively and ethically with these issues, and to minimize them for my study, I made note of the questions that I had already asked. I assured the participants that I was listening by repeating back to them what they say had said, so that they knew that I was listening to them. Also, given that I was dealing with conflict, which is a relatively sensitive topic, I was conscious of the questions that I asked so as not to ask any vague or insensitive questions.

In order to account for the reliability of my interviews, I gave my supervisor a sample of an interview for him to interpret separately to see whether we got similar interpretations of the same data. The more similar our interpretations were, the more reliable the data became (Cohen et al., 2007). This data was then cross-referenced with other data (questionnaires and classroom observations) for further reliability.

3.4.7 Classroom observations (non-participant)

The methods of data collection for this study also included observation of classroom activities. For this particular study I chose to apply the non-participant observation approach.

3.4.8 Advantages and disadvantages of classroom observations

There are several advantages to using a non-participant observation setting. For instance, the researcher/observer is less likely to be influenced by the group; the research data therefore is likely to be more objective.

Another advantage of using a non-participant classroom observation is that the researcher can use more aids for recording information, as they are not hiding their role. On the other hand, there are also disadvantages to applying non-participant observation. For one, the presence of the researcher can affect how the group would normally act, and can in turn cause the participants not to act naturally. A second disadvantage is that researchers are more likely to impose their own subjective interpretations on events they witness. Other potential sources of bias, which can lower the validity of the study, include: over-reliance on first impressions, incorrect judgments about students' characteristics, and inadequate sampling of classroom activities to support generalizations about students.

Wragg (1994) suggests several ways for a non-participant observer to remain 'non-participant'. He mentions that standing up (giving physical height), as opposed to sitting in a chair, will allow a 'social distance' between the researcher and the pupils, especially at the beginning of the observation. I tried to follow this suggestion and stood up at the beginning of all my observations, but was told shortly after in almost all of the cases to have a seat by the teacher. I also tried to follow Wragg's (1994) other suggestion, to avoid eye contact with the pupils while observing in order to allow a social distance between the researcher and the pupils. This was easily done in all of my observational work.

Wragg (1994) also suggests that if pupils approach you with 'requests for approval', you meet those requests only with smiles. He further contends that if pupils approach you for help or inquiry about something, you politely refuse requests to help and refer them to the teacher. I was approached several times by different pupils in both countries during my classroom observations asking either for permission to go to the loo or to help them with their school work. In all the cases, I referred the pupils to the teacher.

One way I sought to minimize researcher bias during non-participant observation was by mentioning to the teachers at the beginning of lessons that I did not wish to become part of the teaching staff, and that I was not interested in judging them or their teaching, and that my role in the classroom would be that of a non-judgmental observer. I observed and wrote down in a journal (or a notebook) what happened in the

lessons observed. Although it has been suggested that notes could be written either during the observation, or later from memory, I chose to make notes as I was doing the observations because there is a drawback and danger to waiting to jot down events after the lesson; not being able to exactly remember everything that took place that day during the lesson, and having to rely on one's selective memory.

Moreover, according to Cohen et al., (2007) there is a danger in adopting the latter course in that it can cause one to mix facts with interpretation and can cause researcher bias (Cohen et al., 2007). Another way that I controlled for researcher bias during observations was to include a description of the setting, the participants and myself in my note taking during actual observations. I also gave an account of everything that happened, focusing on facts as opposed to writing down my own personal interpretation of what occurred.

In the two English schools that I attended for observation, I had emailed the schools about my research intention and had asked to observe pupils during their PSHE lessons. Once I had gained access to the schools, we planned to meet to discuss my intentions. Then a schedule was drawn up for me to carry out in England. I choose to observe pupils in their PSHE lessons because that is when they cover different topics relating to the pupils' personal, social health and economic well-being, such as sex education and the social and emotional aspects of learning, including drugs, alcohol and conflict. I also chose to observe PSHE lessons because they are more relaxed lessons where pupils do not have to focus as much and would be more likely to be themselves. The total observation time in each school varied due to availability and accessibility. In E1 a total of 7 hours of observation took place (equivalent to 7 lessons). In E2 a total of 9 observations took place (equivalent to 9 lessons). However, not all the data from the observations were included in the data presentation and analysis chapters, as not all yielded useful data.

As in the case of the English schools, I had emailed the schools in Denmark about my research intention and had requested to observe pupils during their *Klassens Time* lessons. The Danish educational system is different to the educational system in England in that they do not have PSHE lessons *per se*. However, they have something called *Klassens Time*, which can be translated as the Class Hour or Class Lesson. The

class hour consists of one lesson that is scheduled for all pupils in all year groups once a week. The teacher is responsible for coming up with activities to fill the period.

Although *Klassens Time* is similar to PSHE in that it is a more relaxed lesson, it differs from PSHE in that it is not necessarily a lesson; rather pupils and teachers spend the class period discussing issues or concerns that the pupils may have, usually focused on conflicts of the day or week. For instance, if the teacher has not planned anything for the lesson, and if the pupils do not suggest discussing any topic, then it is considered a 'free' lesson, so the pupils are free to use computers or to play in the lesson, depending on their age group. In D1 a total of 5 hours of observation took place (equivalent to 5 lessons). In D2 a total of 5 observations took place (equivalent to 5 lessons). However, not all the data from the observations were included in the data presentation and analysis chapters as not all of them yielded useful data.

3.4.9 Documentation

Documentation was originally meant to be a source of data in this study because it was believed that it would be useful in rendering further insight into how conflict is perceived and how conflict education is taught in different schools. According to Cohen et al., (2007) documentation is any written text used and interpreted by researchers to support or enhance their study in some way, and their use can allow the researcher to reach inaccessible persons and participants.

However, because only one school in England provided extensive documentation on pupil conflicts and because the Danish schools did not have such documents, documents were not used as a source of data or analysis in this study. I was able to obtain anti-bullying policies from all four schools, though, and these policies were used as a guide as to how individual schools perceived and responded to pupil conflicts.

3.5 Data analysis

This research used a mixed methods approach for data collection; therefore, both qualitative and quantitative measures were also required for the analysis of the

independent data. The quantitative data (closed questions) were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 16.0 software (SPSS 16.0). This program has been widely used in social science research, and provides the statistical functions that needed to analyse the quantitative data. However, due to the nature of the study being interpretive, I wanted to keep the data as representative of the participant responses as possible, and therefore mainly applied the descriptive functions of SPSS such as frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulation. Cross-tabulation was used to compare the data. Moreover, bar charts proved useful for showing proportional data and were therefore used in the data presentation to present the quantitative data (Muijs, 2004).

The qualitative data in this study consisted of open-ended, sentence completion, scaled and interview responses. The data was organized by research questions, as opposed to research instrument, to make it more reader friendly and easier to analyse. All the relevant data from the questionnaires and interviews were collated to provide a collective answer to each research question. The data was then presented systematically, starting with question 1, 2, 3, etc. The benefit of organizing the data this way was that it allowed patterns, comparisons and consistency of responses to be made across the two different data types.

For the analysis of the data, I felt it was important to keep the flavour of the original data, so I reported words, sentences and phrases, according to how the participant described them. I also felt that reporting direct words, sentences and phrases was a good way of reducing researcher bias, as I was faithful to the actual words used by the participants themselves. The responses were analysed based on the frequency to which they were mentioned, using a count of the frequency of occurrence of a word/ phrase for each question. For example, for the question “What does conflict mean to you”, the number of times ‘fighting’ was given as a response was counted. At times very little categorizing was done, i.e. “fighting” = physical conflict and “name-calling” = verbal conflict (refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed example).

I transcribed all the open-ended and sentence completion responses in their original language and regrouped them according to themes in the original language. I translated key Danish data from each theme into English and to ensure the fidelity of the translation, I did a cross-examination.

I tape recorded and transcribed the interview data myself because this approach entailed benefits such as bringing me closer to the data, encouraging me to start identifying key themes, and helping me become more aware of the similarities and differences between different participants' accounts.

Analytical judgements were achieved in two ways: firstly, by triangulating data from different sources and secondly by comparing the data with external literature for further validation. Noticeably, not all findings were completely supported or addressed in the literature; hence judgements were sometimes made with further interpretation from the data.

Caution and self-awareness was practiced across the data analysis process. This was done by keeping memos; these were not included as secondary data, however, as I felt they would interfere with actual data as they were my own subjective thoughts and feelings that did not originate from the participants themselves.

3.6 Schools

The cases studies used in this research were of four state schools: two in London, England, and two in Copenhagen, Denmark. The schools in each country were state schools selected based on accessibility. Within both England and Denmark I chose two schools in the capital in order to achieve a broad cross-section of culture reflective of English and Danish society.

A total of four schools were selected for this study, two schools from Denmark (D1, D2), and two schools from England (E1, E2). In order to keep these schools anonymous, they were given the following pseudonyms and codes:

1. E1 = Edward Elgar for the school located southeast of London, England.
2. E2 = Charles Dickens for the school located in East London, England.
3. D1 = Hans Christian Andersen for the school located in the west of Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. D2 = Frederik Nielsen for the school located northwest of Copenhagen, Denmark.

All four schools were mixed comprehensives, but Edward Elgar in England and Frederik Nielsen in Denmark were located in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas (low SES-Socio economic status), whereas Charles Dickens in England and Hans Christian Andersen in Denmark were located in more middle class areas (middle SES).

The socioeconomic status of the locations of the schools was measured based on the areas' average income, education, and occupation. In England, this was done using the National Archives website (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, 2009), entering: 'a social, demographic and economic profile of (the geographical locations of the schools)'. In Denmark, this was harder as statistic sites such as www.dst.dk, www.statbank.dk, www.nationmaster.com/country/da-denmark, www.danmarksstatistik.dk, all provided national statistics and did not give a breakdown for individual cities and towns.

3.6.1 Participating schools in England

Edward Elgar (E1)

Edward Elgar is a secondary school located in East London, England. It is a relatively small school, with 1,020 pupils. The pupil body is diverse; 87% of pupils have English as a second language, 75% of pupils have Asian heritage and there is a male to female ratio of 8:2. Also, the area surrounding the school is recognized as being socially and economically deprived, with the majority of pupils attending the school living at or below the poverty line (Morrison, 1999). To quote the Home Office on the geographical location of Edward Elgar:

"There can be no doubt that _____ is a chronically deprived area. Data collected during the 1981 Census indicated that _____ was the second most deprived local authority in the country; following the 1991 Census it had moved to the top of the deprivation league (Willmott, 1994). It is estimated that one-third of the borough's households receive income support" (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

They go on to say that:

"In contrast to most inner city areas, _____ has a predominantly young population - the youngest for all local authorities in the country. A quarter of the borough's residents are under 16 years of age, compared to a median of 19.2 per cent for Inner London boroughs as a whole…It is also worth noting that _____ has one of the most ethnically diverse populations of any area of London. In 1991, people from minority ethnic groups made up 42 per cent of the borough's population. Nearly a quarter of_____ residents are of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, 14 per cent are of African-Caribbean origin and 4 per cent are of South East Asian origin. Taken as

a whole, there are very low levels of ethnic minority representation within the south of the borough" (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

Charles Dickens (E2)

Charles Dickens School is located in the South East of London. It is twice the size of Edward Elgar School, with a pupil population closer to 2,000. It is a mixed comprehensive school located in a socio-economically mixed area that covers an area of 18 square miles, with pupils aged from11-19 from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and a mix of both middle class pupils and working class pupils.

To quote the Home Office on the geographical location of Charles Dickens:

"There are wide socio-economic differences in the borough, from apparent wealth to deprivation and poverty. _____ is a part of the Greater London labour market; the borough includes people of many diverse ethnic, religious and national origins" (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

3.6.2 Participating schools in Denmark

Hans Christian Andersen (D1)

Hans Christian Andersen School is located in the West of Copenhagen city centre and has a pupil population of 588 pupils. Its catchment area covers 3.76 km^2 and has a population of 35,455. It is a multi-ethnic society with many residents from Pakistan, India, Turkey and Asia.

Frederik Nielsen (D2)

Frederik Nielsen School is located in the Northwest of the Copenhagen city centre, with a pupil population of 725. Its catchment area covers 3.52km^2 and has a population of 71,891. It is known for its poly-cultural society, mostly from middle-eastern backgrounds. It is one of Copenhagen's most deprived areas and often referred to as the "ghetto".

3.7 Convenience (purposive) sampling

The samples in this study were pupils aged 11-16 in English and Danish schools and their teachers. In order to gather my desired sample I used purposive sampling, which is also known as 'convenience' sampling. It is a type of non-probability sampling where the sample is not chosen randomly (a feature of probability sampling). Rather, specific criteria were used to select the sample.

According to Patton (1990), there are two types of sampling techniques in social research, probability and non-probability. He states that qualitative researchers often use non-probability sampling and quantitative researchers often use probability sampling. Moreover, Bryman (2008) states that the type of non-probability sample that is often used for case study research is purposive sampling.

Patton (1990) adds that purposive sampling is applied when a researcher selects subjects because of a specific characteristic, in order to access a particular subset of people. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) contend that purposive sampling is used when the researcher wants to access a particular subset of people. A main feature of purposive sampling is that the researcher decides the cases to be included in the sample on the basis that the sample contains a "typicality or possession" of the particular characteristics being sought (Cohen et al., 2007). Starting with a purpose in mind, the sample is selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. The population or target population is that entire group of items or cases about which you want to gather data.

Cohen et al. (2007), state that opportunity sampling is used when researchers simply choose a sample from those they have easy access to. However, there are other aspects to opportunity sampling that Cohen et al. (2007) discussed, which suited my study well. For example, opportunity sampling does not represent any group apart from itself, and it does not seek to generalize about the wider population. Further, opportunity sampling may be a sampling strategy selected for a case study or a number of case studies (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, I have chosen to adopt purposive sampling for several reasons. First, it is often a feature of qualitative research and therefore relevant (Bryman, 2008). Secondly, I chose to use purposive sampling because it allowed me to

handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of the school types and age groups (Patton, 1990).

I did not apply a probability sampling technique as a random sample would not have worked for my particular study, since I was looking at specific criteria for my sample (pupils aged between 11 and 16). However a drawback to using purposive sampling was that it does not pretend to represent the wider population and as such it could be criticized for being selective and biased (Cohen et al., p. 115).

3.7.1 Sample

My research sample consisted of pupils aged 11-16 and their teachers. I chose this age bracket because it is an age where pupils are more likely to have already experienced some sort of conflict and therefore are better able to understand the idea of conflict. Also, for pupils in England, it is a time of transition, from the smaller and cosier environment of primary school, to a bigger, unfamiliar secondary school. Moreover, it is often the age where pupils become actively independent from their families for the first time, in that they may now be walking to and from school by themselves and may rely less on their teachers for emotional support.

Although the English and Danish educational systems are similar in that compulsory education stops at the age of 16, what differs is the ages of pupils in secondary schools (England) and *folkeskoler* (Denmark). Moreover, due to the differences in educational structure between England and Denmark – Denmark having the *folkeskole* which is all ages starting from 7, and England having primary and secondary schools, a direct comparison with primary school would have been difficult as the age to which pupils start secondary school in England and *folkeskole* in Denmark differs. For instance, an 11 year old pupil in England will be in year 7, whereas an 11 year old pupil in Denmark will only be in year 5. Obviously there are some exceptions and not every single pupil will be the same age in every year group. Therefore, in order to get the distribution by age range across the schools, I had to select my sample based on year group as opposed to age group. Below is a break-down of how the age groups correspond to year groups within England and Denmark.

England	Denmark
YR 7=11 years old	YR 5=11 years old
YR 8=12 years old	YR 6=12 years old
YR 9=13 years old	YR 7=13 years old
YR 10=14 years old	YR 8=14 years old
YR 11=15 years old	YR 9=15 years old
YR 12=16 years old OPTIONAL	YR 10= 16 years old

In order to gain access to the sample, a full CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check was completed before the schools were contacted. Then the schools were contacted via the head teacher and were informed of the research intentions and procedures (Oliver, 2003). This was followed by meetings with relevant teachers and members of staff to discuss the procedures and intentions of this study (see section 3.11). Questions of anonymity and confidentiality were addressed and a schedule was drawn up for me to carry out my research (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the CRB clearance form).

3.8 Research story

Initially I had researched a list of secondary schools in London based on their locations and SES. I then sent the chosen schools an email explaining my background, research aims, and interest in their particular school, saying that I would give them a call the following week. After about a week or so, my Ph.D. Supervisor was able to contact two schools for me.

Due to the comparative nature of my study, I had to travel between England and Denmark on a number of occasions for data collection, which was very time consuming. In addition, gaining access to both English and Danish schools involved a much longer process of negotiation, especially because the Danish schools were going through budget cuts and reconstruction at the time. As a result I spend almost a month negotiating with the Danish schools before permission for access was granted. This was a major setback to my study. Moreover, because I applied a multi-method approach to data collection the time spent collecting data at each school proved longer than I had anticipated.

3.9 Questionnaire construction

The literature review identified several questionnaires on pupil conflict in secondary schools; however, on closer examination it was found that none of these were likely to elicit responses which would be relevant to the research questions that informed this particular research. As a result, it was necessary to develop two entirely new questionnaires, one for pupils aged 11-16, and one for their teachers. The questionnaires included items on perceptions of conflict, responses to conflict, participants' understanding of their role in managing conflicting situations and their evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes and policies within their schools.

In order to test the effectiveness of the questionnaires and to get a feel for English and Danish schools, pilot studies were carried out. For the pupil pilots, the questionnaires were handed out by a teacher. For the teacher pilots, I handed out the questionnaires. About a week after the questions were administered, focus groups were conducted with the teachers and pupils, separately. I first met with the pupils, whom I had divided into two groups, male and female, because I wanted to make sure that each gender group felt comfortable speaking about the points in the questionnaires and that they were not distracted by one another. Then I met with the teachers. The aim of the focus groups was to check that the order of questions on the questionnaires was logical, that the questions were understandable and that the questions related to the research questions. More specifically, the objectives of the focus group were to:

- Examine the clarity of the questionnaire items, instructions and layout
- Gain feedback from participants on the type of questions and their formatting
- Gain feedback on any ambiguities or difficulties in wording
- Gain feedback on redundant and irrelevant items
- Check the time taken to complete the questionnaire
- Identify commonly misunderstood or non-completed items
- Use the information gathered to refine or modify the research instrument and methods for large-scale study.

In England, a pilot study was carried out in June 2008 in a state secondary school in Gloucestershire. A pilot was also carried out in Denmark in April 2009 in a *folkeskole* in Brondby Strand. These two towns were selected based on accessibility. In the case of both pilot studies, the head teachers of the schools were contacted, briefed on the purpose of the pilot and asked for permission to carry out the study. Once permission was granted, the head in each school was asked to select about eight pupils and four teachers to distribute the questionnaires to. Heads were also asked to select pupils to cover the age range 11-16, and to choose a mix of male and female students, in order to make the sample representative of both genders and the desired age group.

In England, the questionnaires were carried out in English and in Denmark they were translated and carried out in Danish. Once all the data was collected, the data in Danish was translated into English.

3.9.1 Pilot study – England

In England, the head teacher distributed eight questionnaires to the pupils; however, due to availability at the time, he chose three female students and five male students. Three questionnaires were distributed to teachers, two females and one male. A week after the questionnaires were completed the focus groups took place.

As a result of the pilot project and the focus groups with the English pupils, I removed three questions from the pupil questionnaire, as follows: 16a (think of a time when you have experienced conflict at school. What was the conflict?), 16b (what do you think caused the conflict), and 16c (how did you deal with it?). These were removed mainly because many pupils had left those questions unanswered. When the focus groups were asked why pupils had not completed those questions, the consensus was that the questions required too much thinking back to an incident and were a bit unclear. Some open-ended questions were also removed from the teacher questionnaires because the teachers felt that they were too general and that they would not yield any relevant data.

3.9.2 Pilot study - Denmark

In Denmark the head teacher of the selected school chose three male pupils and four female pupils to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires that were handed to the Danish pupils for their pilot project had already been amended following the English pupil pilot, which explains why the Danish pupils felt that the questionnaire was comprehensible and well-structured.

As for the teachers, four participated in the Danish pilot, two females and two males. The result of the focus group with the Danish teachers was a few grammatical changes.

The table below illustrates the timeline for the different elements of the current study, from preliminary study to writing up. Each year is subdivided for clarity into three periods of four months each. From this it can be seen that the research process, although broadly progressing chronologically, is not entirely linear.

3.10 Timeline

Task	Year one			Year two			Year three			Year four		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Course work (ARM-Advanced Research Methods) & Foundation Research Methods)												
Upgrade												
Literature search												
Development of research plan												
Methodology												
Identification of respondents												
Pilot study (England)												
Data collection (English schools)												
Pilot study (Denmark)												
Data collection (Danish schools)												
Data analysis												
Writing up of thesis												

3.11 Ethical considerations

Prior to the data collection an outline of the aims and intentions of this research, along with its ethical considerations, was presented to the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSSREC) at the University of Warwick for approval (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the Ethical Approval Form). Once this approval was granted the following steps were taken to maintain ethics within the study.

3.11.1 Informed consent

According to the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004), voluntary informed consent is based on four notions: voluntarism, full information, competence, and comprehension. Voluntarism is when participants are told that they can freely choose to take part in the study. Full information is the idea that participants must be fully informed about the nature of the study and must be told that they have the right to withdraw at any point. Competence and comprehension are similar, in that competence refers to the researcher's role to ensure that the participants are capable and mature enough to decide if they want to partake in study, once given relevant information. Comprehension refers to the role of the researcher in ensuring that the participants fully understand the nature of the study, and in cases where participants are not of age to comprehend or agree voluntarily, researchers must seek alternative ways to seek informed consent, such as the collaboration and approval of those in guardianship (BERA, 2004; Farrell, 2005; David, Edwards & Aldred, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007).

Because the pupils in this study were between the ages of 11and 16, parental/guardian consent was required. Therefore, a standardized letter was sent out to the participating pupils' parents/guardians entailing the objectives of the study, followed by a section requesting their signed consent. If informed consent was denied, the pupils were withdrawn from the study. There were a few cases where pupils had to be withdrawn from the study due to lack of parental/guardian consent.

3.11.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity refers to participants' right of privacy. To ensure anonymity in my study, the names of the participants and the schools were not revealed. Rather, they were given pseudonyms. For instance, codes were used to identify people; during questionnaires and interviews two lists were made, one with the names of the participants for my own reference and one with codes (aliases) for their names. These lists were then kept in two different places for safe keeping (Gregory, 2003; Greig et al., 2007; Lindsay, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007).

The parent/guardian letter requested consent for audio recording of the interviews; consent was also obtained from the participants themselves before the interviews took place. Prior to starting each interview, each participant was reminded that the sessions would be recorded and asked if they were happy with this. Recorded sessions started only after verbal consent was reiterated by the participants. On the documentation, the pupils' names were obscured from the incidence slips to keep them anonymous. There was no need to apply anonymity to the observation notes as I was a non-participant observer and therefore was not observing long enough to be aware of the names of the different pupils. In cases where I wanted to make notes I just referred to the pupils by gender as opposed to name.

Overall, care was taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in this study, from clearly outlining the objectives of this study to all participants, to restricting access to data which identify respondents, seeking the approval of the respondents prior to any disclosure about respondents take place, and non-disclosure of the data (Gregory, 2003; Greig et al., 2007, Lindsay, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, no information was passed within the different schools, all data was handled by myself, apart from the samples that were given to my supervisor for second opinion and for strengthening the validity of the study. Even with those pieces of data the names of the participants were obscured with correcting fluid.

3.11.3 Issues of reflexivity

Since the main concern of science is the elimination of methodological bias, and the intentions of certain research projects are to favour the work of certain authors (Lather, 2004), when it comes to objectivity in research, a dichotomous way of making sense of the world can become problematic. Objectivity is not black or white; there is a lot of grey. Seeing things as either black or white can be very dangerous because there is no room for grey, no room for flexibility. Having said that, since it is humanly impossible to remain one hundred percent neutral in research, then how can the researcher ensure that they get close to complete objectivity, or that they take a self-critical stance regarding the assumptions that they incorporate, that they remain neutral and fair? What are the measures that one needs to take?

According to Lather (1986), researchers can remain neutral and fair by eliminating bias and by making sure that their data is trustworthy through regular evaluation of the results. She states,

> *"If we want illuminating and resonant theory grounded in trustworthy data, we must formulate self-corrective techniques that will check the credibility of our data and minimize the distorting effects of personal bias upon the logic of evidence" (p. 65).*

Lather (1986) elaborates on an urgent need to construct research designs that push us towards becoming vigorously self-aware. She goes on to suggest that empirical results need to be subject to criticism, that the researcher needs to document how his or her assumptions may have affected the data to ensure that his or her own personal logic has not interfered with the data collected.

More specifically, since it is the researcher who determines the codes and categories for examination, it is likely that they have ideas and thoughts that arise throughout the research, which they would want to add to the data. This can be problematic, especially if this is not controlled, because the ideas and thoughts could become data in the process of reflexivity (BERA, 2004). In order to minimize this, I kept a journal, separate from the actual data, to jot down any comments (and the date of those comments) and reflections that arose during data analysis. Another way I practiced reflexivity was to closely monitor my own interactions with participants,

making sure that my own perceptions and background did not influence the research (BERA, 2004).

3.12 Conclusion

The research design of this study was developed to produce as effective a response to the research questions as possible. To do this, the design was made up of several different instruments. These instruments consisted of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and documentations. This research intentionally did not include any theoretical standpoints, as I wanted the data to be as representative of the participant responses as possible. Therefore, no theory or hypothesis was formulated at the onset of the research. The aim of the study was to report findings in their neutral settings as opposed to in a controlled environment.

This study took on a comparative approach to better explore the depth and richness of the results. The comparative approach was reinforced by the case study element of the thesis, comparing four individual schools in two countries. An objective perspective was taken across all four schools in order to ensure fairness, consistency and to reduce research bias. The comparative aspect of the study enabled me to further my understanding of conflict, perceptions and responses, as well as to present a more comprehensive study.

Chapter 4

Findings from Schools in England

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings relating to teacher and pupil perceptions of, and responses to conflict from the two case study schools in England. It will start by presenting teacher questionnaire and interview responses, which will then be followed by pupil questionnaire and interview responses.

4.1 Teacher findings in Edward Elgar School (E1)

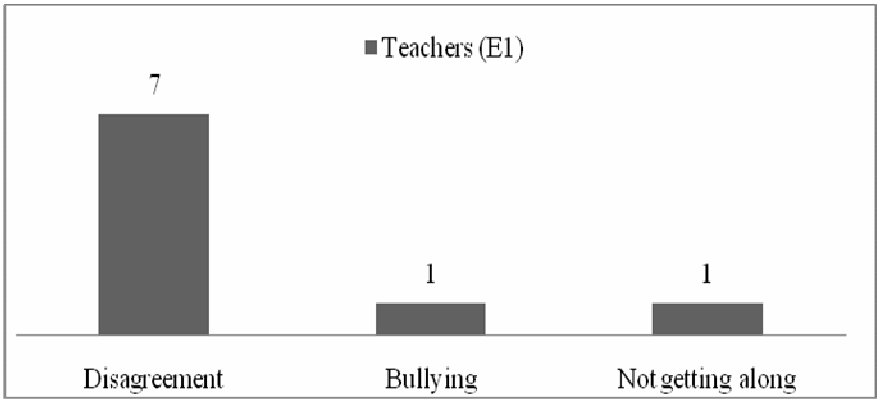
4.1.1 Teacher findings on perceptions of conflict in Edward Elgar School (E1)

There were a total of nine completed teacher questionnaires in E1. The same nine teachers were also interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to probe the questionnaire responses, in order to elaborate on the questionnaire findings. Having said that, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses because teachers either did not complete a questionnaire question or because the interviews were semi-structured, which meant that not all teachers were asked exactly the same questions; therefore, some responses will contain fewer than nine teacher responses. On the other hand, some answers consist of more than nine response categories as some teachers gave more than one response to a question.

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

This question was open-ended and the response categories for it derived from the actual responses given by all nine teachers. The responses are presented in the graph below.

Questionnaire responses



The results of the table above shows that most teachers in E1 defined conflict as a *disagreement*. Other definitions included bullying and not getting along.

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

Interview responses

Disagreement

"Conflict means where there is a disagreement that has potentially become aggressive potentially lead to polarization, a breakdown of relationships."

"It's a continuous disagreement between two pupils. The conflict can be on different levels, verbal conflict, physical conflict … it could also be due to a misunderstanding which is most of the time the case because they have not communicated with each other properly."

"When a disagreement comes to a head, whether that's a physical sense, whether that's in a verbal conflict."

"Any disagreement between people which is not intellectually based, but I suppose emotional disagreement between people, it could be verbal, it could be a physical manifestation."

"When two people have a problem and sometimes it results in violence, sometimes it just might be a disagreement, different views, different opinions."

Misunderstandings

Although most teachers in E1 defined conflict as a disagreement, some teachers also defined conflict as a misunderstanding:

"Conflict is between other people or groups or countries when there is a misunderstanding of a problem and it might be on going and they can't solve it ... I also

think it could be conflict of interest … so it is very often to do with someone's interest, it could be territorial."

"Difference of opinion which results in misunderstanding or fighting mentally or physically, it starts from some misunderstanding."

Violence

"Conflict means to me when people use violence or words that are against each other."

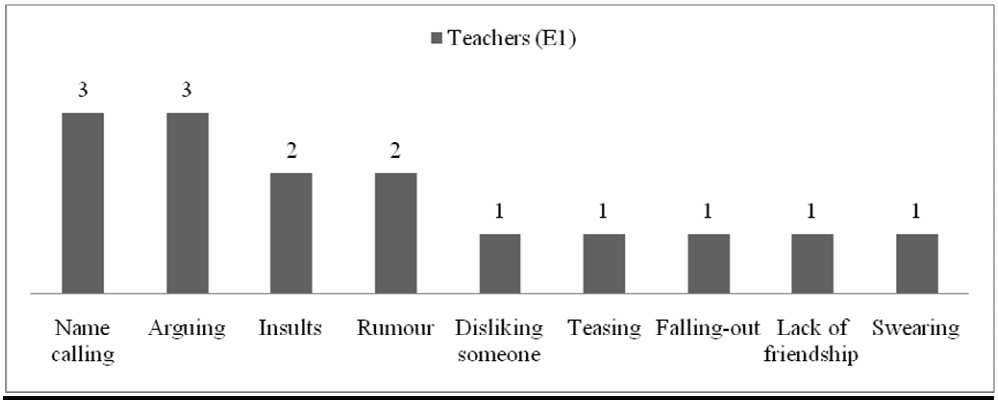
"It's a confrontation, between one or more people which can escalate into violence but doesn't necessarily have to, and it's when you have two opposing wills, two opposing ideologies, two opposing methods something where neither parties are willing to give in."

The interview responses above suggest that the majority of teachers in E1 defined conflict as a disagreement in their interview responses (as well as in their questionnaire responses). This means that their interview responses supported their questionnaire responses and that teachers overall in E1 defined conflict as a disagreement.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

As with the previous question, this question was open-ended, and so the response categories to this question were derived and reported according to the number of times that they were mentioned by the nine teachers who filled out the questionnaires.

Questionnaire responses



It can be seen from the table above that teachers in E1 perceive there to be quite a few conflicts that happen often in their school. The most frequently mentioned were *name-calling* and *arguing*, therefore on the whole it appears that they view the most common conflict to be verbal conflicts.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Most teachers perceived the most common pupil conflict at their school to be verbal conflicts such as arguments and bickering.

Verbal

"Verbal more than anything, perhaps cussing, that kind of thing."

"Arguments."

"It tends to be conflict in terms of another pupil verbally saying something inappropriate to another pupil. It could be that they just dislike the person and they just want that conflict whether the conflict is there or not."

"I think the most common type is just bickering really. Somebody has done something which leads to a verbal response from another student which then escalates and you then have people arguing. It's the verbal escalation that's the most common form."

"There is a lot of pushing and shoving around and quite often it's really very serious. There could be something about the way you look, if you are a bit different, you know you're too fat or something about your face or the colour of your skin, but in this school, the white would be a minority … homophobic bullying definitely … more verbal, even if somebody looks a bit gay they would make remarks … and often they use the word 'gay' sometimes as a joke."

"Name-calling, people playing football kicking each other, he said/she said, it's the main big issue… sometimes cultural differences, someone is being not very respectful."

Friendship breakdowns

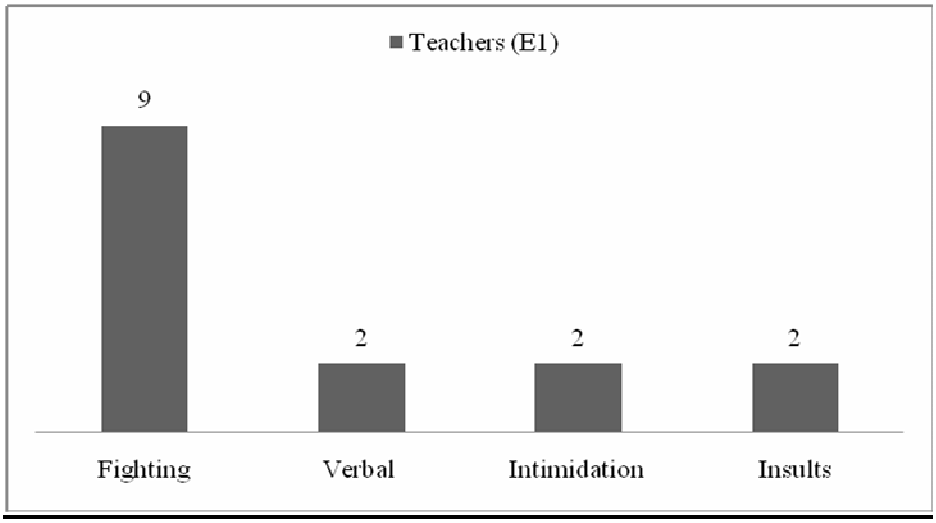
"Friendship, because some people want to be friends with some people and other people don't like it, for silly things, and sometimes conflicts regarding supremacy … and sometimes conflict of interest as well. For adults that seems sometimes silly but for children they think that it's life and death."

"Friendship breakdowns, where someone perceives that they have been disrespected or insulted in some way, and they take a stance which is then supported by other people."

The teacher interview responses about the most common conflict in their school supports their questionnaire responses, in that majority of teachers believed the most common pupil conflicts to be verbal.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Questionnaire responses



All teachers in E1 mentioned *fighting* as the most serious pupil conflict in their school. However, verbal, insults and intimidation were also mentioned by some teachers as being serious pupil conflicts.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Interview responses

Physical (fighting)

"If students are exhibiting signs of anger, I think there is always a potential for that to develop into something more, maybe even physical conflict."

"When they are fighting, when they're uncontrollable; when aggression is used."

"Any physical injuries, I mean obviously so there is no question about that. A play fight is not serious in itself but I think it is important to stop it because it may turn serious. I think it's serious if it's actually causing any distress or damage to that person and especially if it's on-going and long term."

Verbal

"When conflict creates an environment when children use abuse language or physical threats, only verbal argument we don't take as serious, it's okay, it happens."

"When it becomes aggressive and I don't mean physically, if verbal aggression is if not worse just as bad as a physical, it can include swearing but even if it doesn't include swearing it still could be considered as aggressive verbal conflict, depending on what was being said, and physical is completely out of the question."

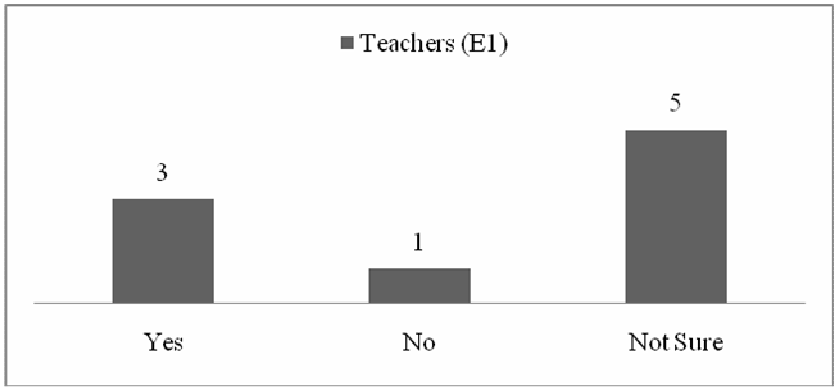
"When somebody has been repeatedly been put down by somebody else, is intimidated, or threatened. So I think there is two levels of seriousness. The first is about repeated exchange, whatever… the second is that it is serious if there is a pattern of conflict so I can think of a student who repeatedly bumps into another as they are coming into the classroom and there is no witness and the other one doesn't speak out about it, but it is noticeable."

Some respondents appear to see conflict in terms of something physical whilst others see it as more verbal. In terms of definitions, and perceptions of the most common types of pupil conflicts, most teachers seem to see conflict as verbal. However when asked for their perceptions of the most serious pupil conflicts, most teachers seemed to view it as physical.

Question: Is self-harming a pupil problem that exists in your school?

I chose to follow up the question, "What is the most serious form of conflict in your school?" with "Is self-harm a problem at your school?" because I wanted to examine whether teachers considered self-harm to be a serious form of pupil conflict. Conversely, I wanted to see whether teachers overlooked self-harm as a pupil problem occurring in their schools, relative to the types of conflict mentioned above.

Questionnaire responses



Total missing, N = 0

The majority of teachers responded that they were *not sure* whether self-harming was a pupil problem that existed in their school. However, there were some teachers in E1 that acknowledged that it was a pupil problem. One teacher did not feel that it was a problem in their school.

Question: Is self-harming a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Interview responses

No

"I haven't. I'll be honest with you but I am not saying it's not happening. Apart from smoking cigarettes I mean that's a form of self-harm isn't it? But not like cutting, I am not aware of that."

"There is not a huge amount of self-harming, certainly not that has been brought to my attention and staff are very good at reporting things, so I would say yes it does happen, I would say less than five per cent."

"Not something that I have really come into contact with. I mean you sort of hear of the occasional rumour or whatever. It certainly is not something that has been evident with any of the students that I teach. I wonder whether that's partly because I mainly teach the younger year groups because PHSE is an optional subject after fourteen so it is something that I would associate more with slightly older teenagers."

"Not really."

"Not that I know of, no."

Yes

"Self-harming is an issue, it's a worry, but probably my definition of conflict doesn't fit in with that, although what has led to that person harming themself could be a result of the conflict. So as a result of the conflict the pupil may decide they are going to self-harm. So the conflict can lead on to the person harming themselves."

It appears from the teacher interview responses that overall respondents are not clear on whether self-harm is a pupil problem that exists in their schools. Their responses (both questionnaire and interview) also seem to indicate that self-harm is not something they have thought about much.

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

"Self-harm is like when you hurt yourself for some reason because you feel like it's your fault of doing something."

"Any sort of infliction or injury and it can be superficial injury, the most common is scratching with a pin or a sharp object on the skin. Anorexia, not eating is a form of self-harm as well, or bulimia. Anorexia is always very difficult, especially when it's borderline, difficult to diagnose but there's indications with some but they're certainly borderline."

"When people do physical damage to themselves particularly by scratching, cutting parts of their body and that's the classic types of self-harm that will get picked up by any member of staff who will then pass in on to the Child Protection Officer."

"Girls cutting themselves, I've seen girls cutting themselves … with a compass … I've seen kids mark themselves, kind of write their names on their arms. But very mild cases we've had."

Question: Do you think that self-harm is a form of conflict?

Interview responses

"Self-harming could not be the result of conflict generally. In very rare cases if someone is unable to cope with other people then sometimes they go for self-harming, it's a very rare case. I don't know of any incident like that."

"It could be something going on at home and the problem in the school is that kids are very astute and very intelligent to a certain degree they don't like talking to staff, to teachers because they understand that it comes back to the Child Protection Officer and to the Social Service Authority. So usually kids say things to other kids."

"Not conflict within themselves, within their own right, no."

"It's an internal conflict yeah. It's a conflict between the individual's perception of how they are and their perception of how think they should be, how they think society expects them to be… that causes conflict because they perceive that they fall below the target that they believe society, whether its family, school, the wider society has set for them."

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same view of pupil conflict?

Interview responses

It depends

"I think that teachers with experience gain more understanding of what the pupils' interpretations are, how they see conflict. I think sometimes people who are less experienced may trivialize things that are not true so it takes some experience to understand that."

"It depends on the incident. I think it's pretty much close. I think teachers are pretty aware of what's going on. I mean I myself would know what the conflict was about."

Not sure

"I don't know. I would like to hope so. I would think probably yes and there might be some exceptions."

No

"That's interesting, probably not. I think students would probably place a different emphasis at least. I mean I don't know, I think that would be something interesting to ask the students on that."

"No I don't. I think young teachers have more understanding than some old teachers. Some old teachers are more like pigeons. Teachers and kids are very different, especially today so even the language is different."

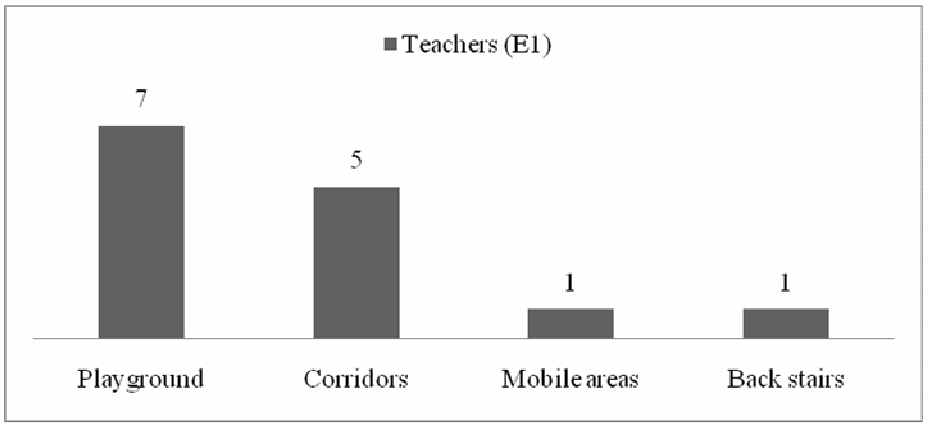
"Not always. Sometimes we share sometimes we are different."

"Probably not, no. I should think it's wildly different, I mean I am a fairly young teacher and I find it hard to remember what it was like as an eleven year old, why it is you know that they get into these ridiculous situations about the tiniest of things and will get so upset about some perceived slight. But then it obviously actually is very important to them and I think that that's the thing, it's the difference between what pupils prioritise and whether actually where we are going wrong as a school is that we are giving too much leeway to students that their priorities of looking cool, or being top dog are actually indulged … cause I think as teachers we come across conflict as very functional, 'this is interrupting my lesson', and therefore they stop for that reason. I would say that there is a big difference in priority."

Although some teachers believed that pupils and teachers shared the same notions of pupil conflicts, majority of teachers interviewed in E1 did not believe that pupils and teachers shared the same notions of pupil conflict.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Questionnaire responses



The responses above indicate that teachers in E1 believe that most pupil conflicts happen either in the *playground* or the *corridors*. Other places mentioned were the mobile areas and the back stairs.

Question: Where in school does most pupil conflict take place?

Interview responses

The playground/the classroom/the corridors

"Usually in places that are not supervised, sometimes in the classroom, but more frequently in corridors, in open spaces, the playground."

"Sometimes in the classroom, more often I would say in the corridors and sometimes in the playground they're re less noticeable because obviously there is bigger space and also we are not in the playground that much so we won't notice it that much there."

"It tends to be areas where they think that teachers are not looking ...behind the mobile areas or the back stairs and they are not very visible so they feel that that's their opportunity to instigate or continue with whatever conflict that they are having."

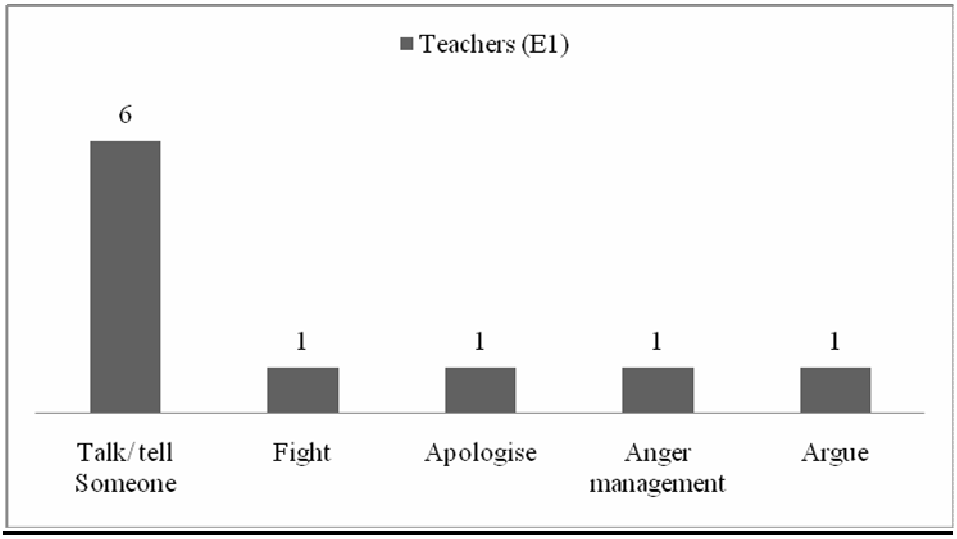
"Mainly in the playground, very rare in classrooms… corridors, lesson change is a big one."

The results from the interview questions on where most pupil conflict happens reaffirmed the questionnaire responses, in that overall teachers in E1 believed that most pupil conflicts happen in the *playground* and then the *corridors*.

4.1.2 Teacher responses to conflict in Edward Elgar School (E1)

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Questionnaire responses



When asked for ways that pupils resolve or manage their conflicts at school, the teacher responses, represented in the graph above, indicate that teachers perceive that pupils, for the most part, *talk to or tell someone* about their problems. Other responses included fighting, apologizing, anger management, and arguing.

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Solve or manage the conflict

"Generally, if there is for example a physical conflict between someone that looks like it could become a fight in 99% of cases children stop it, they will stand around and stop it. They will pull people back and away."

"I think on the whole, they are pretty good actually. I think students are often really helpful when there is a conflict that breaks out, often students will act in a mature way and try and not allow that to become worse to the extent of becoming a fight, so students will, particularly if it's their friends, to make sure they don't get into trouble, they will intervene. But I think also students who are involved very often it is possible to sit them down and try to resolve the conflict."

"They are generally very good at dealing with it …generally speaking there is a friend or somebody who will do the right thing or encourage them to do the right thing. So yes, they are pretty proactive at sorting things out."

"In several ways; there are people in the lesson or outside the lesson who are considered bad, disruptive, but I have noticed when there is a conflict they come forward and sort it out themselves, they take the initiative."

Gender difference

"It depends on their gender. Girls are a lot more emotional they think about things before they do them, boys just react. The problem for us is boys let things go very quickly, after the occasion, if it's fighting, swearing, anger, after they've calmed down it's gone. With girls it continues and continues and it goes on for years, so if there is hatred and it grows, and if it does come to blows it's really difficult because they don't let go."

It depends on…

"I think it varies depending on the person. Some will go into physical fight or calling names. I think some might try to avoid it or speak to their friends or speak to the teachers."

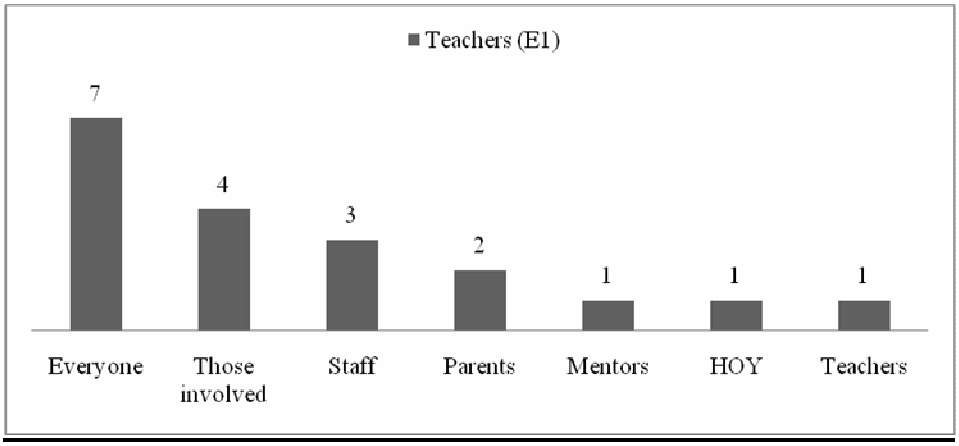
"Different pupils I think would respond in different ways. Some would probably hit back, some would probably make it worse. I think very few would actually let anyone else know, as in teachers, because they feel its peer pressure, 'oh look you are going over and speaking to a teacher, you're weak, why can't you deal with it yourself?' A lot of the times they tend to involve peers from outside the school. So if they are having a conflict with someone inside the school, they'll tend to bring people from outside, what they call it as 'back-up'. Again, I think it ties in with, this image of 'I belong to this group. I am part of this group. I am safe. I am secure."

"I think that varies depending on how effectively it's dealt with. I think that if it is dealt with effectively and there are sanctions in place then the students respond positively, and I mean not only those who are involved with it but also those who witness it."

The teacher interview responses above show some encouraging confidence in pupils and in their ability to manage their conflicts constructively.

Question: Whose responsibility do you think it is to reduce/manage pupil conflict(s) at your school?

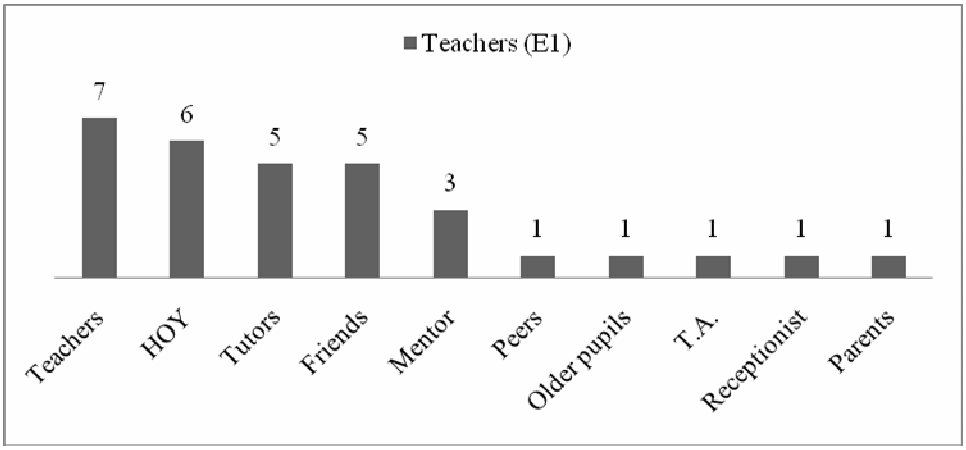
Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in E1 felt that it was *everyone's* responsibility to manage pupil conflicts in their school. A lot of teachers also felt that it was those pupils who were involved in the conflicts that were responsible for managing them. Some teachers felt that the staff were responsible; others felt that parents, mentors, HOY's (Heads of Year) and teachers were responsible.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Questionnaire responses



Teachers in E1 believed that pupils would utilize a number of avenues if they had a problem at school. In their interview responses, the majority of teachers mentioned that pupils would turn to *teachers* if they had a problem at school. Six teachers believed that students would turn to their HOY; five teachers said tutors and

five teachers mentioned friends. Some teachers believed that students would turn to their mentors, peers, older pupils, T.A.s (teacher assistants), receptionists and parents.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Interview responses

Friends

"The choices would be their own friends, someone in school that they trust, someone in school that they have a relationship with."

"I think they would probably talk to their friends or perhaps a teacher they trust, maybe their tutor a Head of Year depending on their relationship with them. But I think in terms of adults they are more likely to talk to a teacher they trust or perhaps one of the support staff like mentors who often have close relationships with many of them students."

"First they talk to their friends and then it depends, teachers or parents."

Variety of people

"Their friends, their form tutor, Head of Year, the subject teacher if there is actually a conflict within the lesson."

"There is a channel; they can talk to Head of Year or sometimes to a teacher that they feel comfortable talking to."

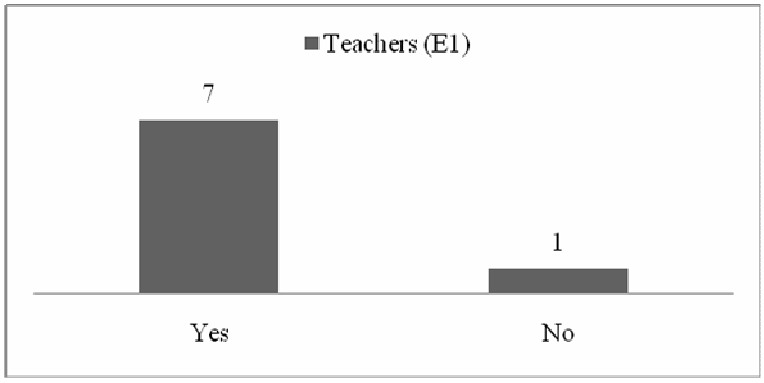
"They might talk to in the first instance with other peers, so their friends to see if it could be sorted out. They might speak to certain teachers it could be their form tutor … very rarely it's parents …I think that they feel that they are burdening if they are to go and talk to parents and whatever conflict they have tends to be within the school setting so they tend to choose people within the school setting rather than not in school."

"With some of them they prefer point of references, a member of staff who is teaching or supervising. I would say for the things that become more of an issue they would generally go to their Head of Year rather than directly to their form tutor … for instance we had an instance in year nine where one of the girls was spreading a rumour that one of the girls was pregnant and the girl in question went straight to Head of Year and that meant it got dealt with and so they know the shortcuts definitely."

The teacher interview responses to the question which asked whom pupils would turn to if they had a problem at school coincided with the teacher questionnaire responses, in that teachers felt that pupils would use a selection of people to turn to, mainly their teachers, HOY and friends.

Question: Do you think that the staff at your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses



Missing, N = 1, One teacher did not reply to this question on the questionnaire.

The graph above suggests that majority of teachers in E1 felt that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce and/or stop pupil conflicts. Only one teacher did not feel that the staff were doing enough to reduce and/or stop pupil conflicts.

Question: Do you think that the staff at your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Majority are, yes. People see it as their responsibility and then you get some people who are more reluctant at times to perhaps challenge issues and inevitably that sometimes does happen."

"I would say, yes. I think they do as much as they can because on the other hand the trouble is everybody is so overloaded with work and as a human being there is only so much you can do. I don't think we ignore it, we try our best."

"I think that some staff do a great deal and do it very well. I think most staff do enough to make sure that serious conflicts are avoided or dealt with. I do think that there are some that don't do as much as they could … I think the education agenda has moved to a different set of priorities, it's all about standards, and it's all about results. Therefore sometimes the quality of pupil experiences is less of a priority than it might be."

No

"No, because can you ever do enough? I think it's something you have to be very vigilant about, and I think there is always potential for conflict between students and I think it's easy when you are busy and got other things to do and I think we as a staff should be able to look out for things, I mean I don't think you should all of your time going out trying to stop conflicts, but I think often things can be dealt with very quickly if they are caught early enough, but also I think they need to be followed through. You know if there are issues between two students, I'm not sure that every member of staff actually follows that through because obviously that does take time and you got to write the right things and inform the right people."

Staff are doing as much as they can

"I think staff are doing as much as they can, but I think some staff don't feel confident enough. I think its confidence because they feel they haven't received training let's say. However I have to say that our staff are very good at dealing with one particular type of conflict which was relating to Child Protection Issues. But if it was other types of conflict then I don't think they would feel comfortable unless there was specific training for it."

"We are doing our best. Someone could think that yes it could be better, yes we agree … actually in my opinion I have suggested in written form that we can involve more parents or we can involve parents more, introducing conflict, introducing bullying, tackling bullying all these things just for the awareness and it would be more helpful. But for this we need more resources, for the parent meetings we need some people. It would be better if you engage or involve parents as well."

The interview responses are consistent with the questionnaire responses above indicating that although a few teachers felt that staff at their school could so more to reduce or stop pupil conflicts, majority felt that they were doing enough.

4.1.3 Teacher awareness of school policies in Edward Elgar School(E1)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with pupil conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"We have a behavioural policy; we have an anti-bullying policy those are the most clear ones that address conflict."

"We do have an anti-bullying policy. Also I think that there is a kind of general ethos in the school that we don't want conflict."

"We've get a behaviour policy it's not just about conflict in general but conflict in part of the behaviour. You've got equal equality policy so that would include racial, sexual, and homophobic."

"The school at present has a behavioural policy, so there are certain guidelines that we have to follow."

"Currently we have been working as a working group where member[s] of staff has [have] been leading on and developing policy, different policies, and we have been looking at anti-bullying policy although I don't think we've got that ready yet, so that's still to come out … I am working on something called 'solution focused' groups. Starting with one year groups and getting pupils to think about and reflect on their behaviour not just in lesson but it's an actual programme where you get pupils to talk about their behaviour and looking at conflict, how we can set up groups, peer mediation. And part of solution focus is to get pupils to think of how to solve those conflicts themselves, amongst themselves. It's a lot of reflective work but its pupils doing the work, not teachers telling them how to."

"I believe so I mean I am not fully sort of conversant with it but if it's not a document then I'd say that we have procedures to follow if bullying takes place, which are routinely followed across all year groups."

The teacher interview responses above show that most teachers in E1 were aware of policies that their school had in place to deal with conflict.

Question: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes."

"Majority are, yes. People see it as their responsibility and then you get some people who are more reluctant at times to perhaps challenge issues and inevitably that sometimes does happen."

"Yes as much as there is reference to it and that pupils have it in their diary so if necessary you can point them back to the fact that you know these are the things we agreed to as a school."

"They are helpful, but actually we are working on it still because last year the policy we had we reviewed it and we asked children to put their input, we had so many number of things with children as well so we are improving it still."

"Well yeah I think so. Especially if people follow it and aware of it, and we had whole school staff training."

"Yeah I think that's been useful so far. Although when we come to reviewing it and looking at it there is always more things that we can consider, whether it's add or change."

"I'd say that it is useful for keeping a lid on most of it and dealing with the worst excesses when they do crop up. I wonder whether what it actually isn't so effective with is enabling all students to learn how to deal with conflict in general."

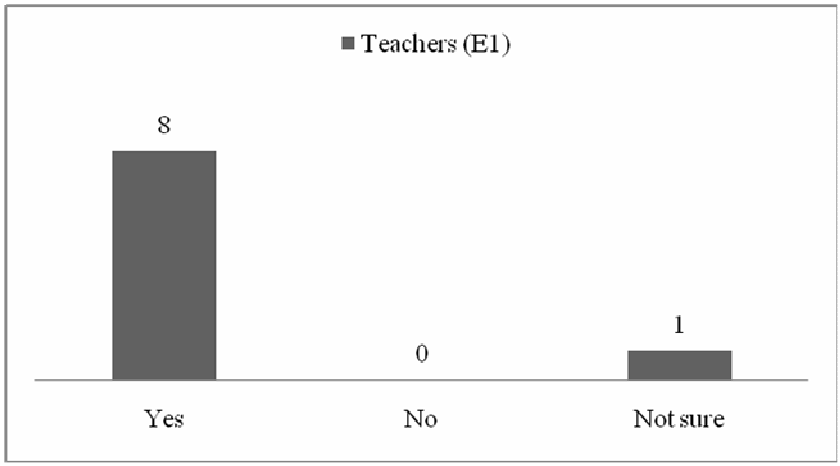
No

"I think the anti-bullying policy could be promoted a bit more. I can remember when it was written and it was introduced but I can't recall it being mentioned very much since … it seems to me something that we should look at every year or on a regular basis and maybe reiterate that with staff and students."

"No I wouldn't say so. I believe the school won an award for the information we gave for homophobia, we are one of the leading schools if I remember correctly."

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

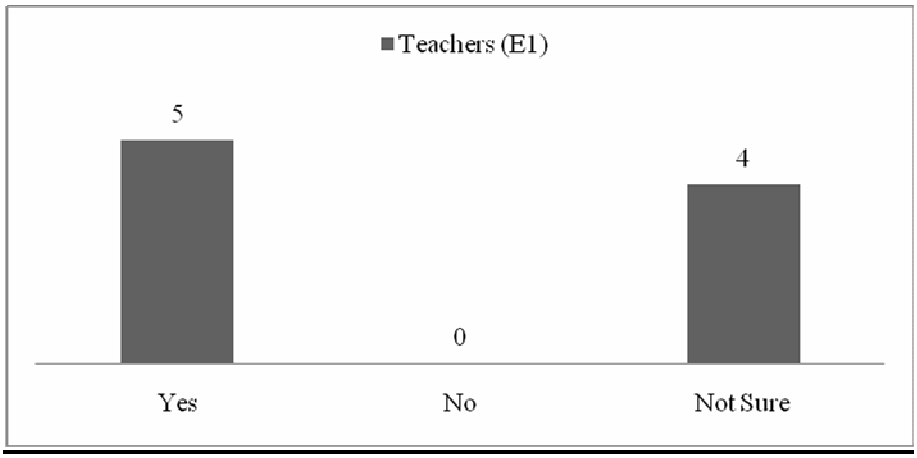
Questionnaire responses



The graph above shows that 8 out of 9 teachers in E1 were aware of the anti-bullying policy in their school, while one teacher was not sure.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses



When asked if teachers felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, over half of the teachers said *yes,* while just under half said that they were not sure.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes, oh yes they did in the existing one which is being reviewed this year and they are a part of that."

"Yes, yes, yes, actually not this year but last year we invited different groups of people to make comments and suggestions."

"One thing I didn't mention, we do have a school council with student representatives, and it may be that that's the forum in which they have discussed bullying and the anti-bullying policy. But if they have, I am not aware of that, I mean I am not party to what does on in the school council. I mean these things are never a hundred per cent perfect, but I think that's more of a forum that I think the students could have quite a say and maybe they should have more of a say in the policies of the school in general."

"Yes. When they were being redrafted, yes the pupil council were asked about it and there was also a working group, which I was a member of and so that was made up of staff and anybody who was free to join that. It was circulated to staff before it was finally agreed."

"Yes, what we do in the school is have a school council (consisting of pupils)…I think it's a couple from each year. We have pupil council and there is another one where they come to the governors and speak."

"I would think that is something keeps happening or coming up constantly I would think that that would then influence the management in their decision on how to make the policy. I mean usually there is something called the student council…and I think there is a possibility that they could have a say. Whether how much they would get listened to I don't know that's another question."

"When we were part of this behaviour working group, the senior member of staff that's been leading on it was taking on board our views but she also took on odd pupils' views where she got pupils to actually photograph places in the school that they felt unsafe, that was very effective, very powerful and we had a look at it to give our comments on it I things like 'why do you think pupils took a photograph of that place of this school?' And I think it's actually been put into action, It's not just the case of oh we'll, we'll do this, take some pictures that's it, finished, end of story. The school has actually taken it further which is brilliant. Like there was a particular area in this school that was deemed to be unsafe, or very sort of closed off, isolated and they've opened up the walls by putting some windows in so it's much more open, much more visible let's say. Cause the unsafe places are deemed to be invisible, not seen, isolated that kind of thing."

When asked if it was the pupils' suggestion to get the windows in, the teacher replied:

"It must have been. I mean I don't know the details of it but it must have been because that's what came out from that…I think they are having a greater say than they used to, the student council is now up and running and I think that its input into these things will be immensely valuable but I don't think that we are there yet."

All the teachers interviewed believed that pupils had a say on the anti-bullying policies in their school. This confirms the teacher questionnaire responses in that overall, teachers in E1 believe that pupils do have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

4.1.4 Summary of teacher findings from E1

Perceptions of conflict

The results from the teacher responses in E1 indicate that overall there was a general agreement between the teacher questionnaire and interview responses in this school. When it came to perceptions of conflict, most of the teachers perceived conflict in verbal terms. For instance, most teachers in E1 defined conflict as a disagreement. Teachers perceived the most common forms of pupil conflict to be name-calling and arguing. When asked about the most serious pupil conflict, however, most teachers said fighting. Although in their questionnaire responses a majority of E1 teachers were not sure if self-harm was a pupil problem in their school, some teachers did recognize that

some pupils were experiencing it. What is interesting is that the teacher responses were slightly different at interview, with most teachers contending that self-harm was *not* a pupil problem in their school.

In terms of the location of conflict, the majority of teachers in E1 agreed that most pupil conflicts happened in the playground. Furthermore, when asked if they felt that teachers and pupils shared the same idea of pupil conflict, there was a mixed response, with some teachers saying that it depended on the experience of the individual teachers, while some thought it depended on the incident. Some teachers did feel that pupils and teachers shared same notions of pupil conflicts, while the majority did not.

Responses to conflict

When it came to the section of the questionnaires and interviews concerning responses to conflict, the teachers' replies also remained consistent. For example when asked to mention some ways that pupils resolve or manage their conflicts most teachers said that pupils would either talk to someone about them or solve them. This shows a confidence in pupils' ability to solve their conflicts on their own. When teachers were asked who they thought pupils would talk to if they had a problem at school, the majority said teachers; this was followed by HOY, tutors and friends. Moreover, when asked who they thought was responsible for reducing or managing pupil conflicts in their school, most teachers said *everyone*. Finally, when asked if teachers thought that the staff at their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflict most of them said *yes*.

Policies

Finally, teacher perceptions of school policies were sought in a series of three questions, where teacher questionnaire and interview responses also proved to be consistent. First, in order to examine their awareness of school policies, teachers were asked if their school had any policies that addressed pupil conflicts. The policies that were mentioned by teachers in E1 were: a behavioural policy, an equality policy, a general ethos in the school where conflict is not wanted, and an anti-bullying policy. When asked specifically if their school had an anti-bullying policy the majority of teachers said *yes*. When further asked if they felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, the majority also said *yes*. Overall, teachers in E1

showed awareness of policies in their school that addressed and dealt with pupil conflicts and felt that pupils did have a say in the anti-bullying policy in their school. Moreover, a majority of teachers in E1 said that the school policies were helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts in their school.

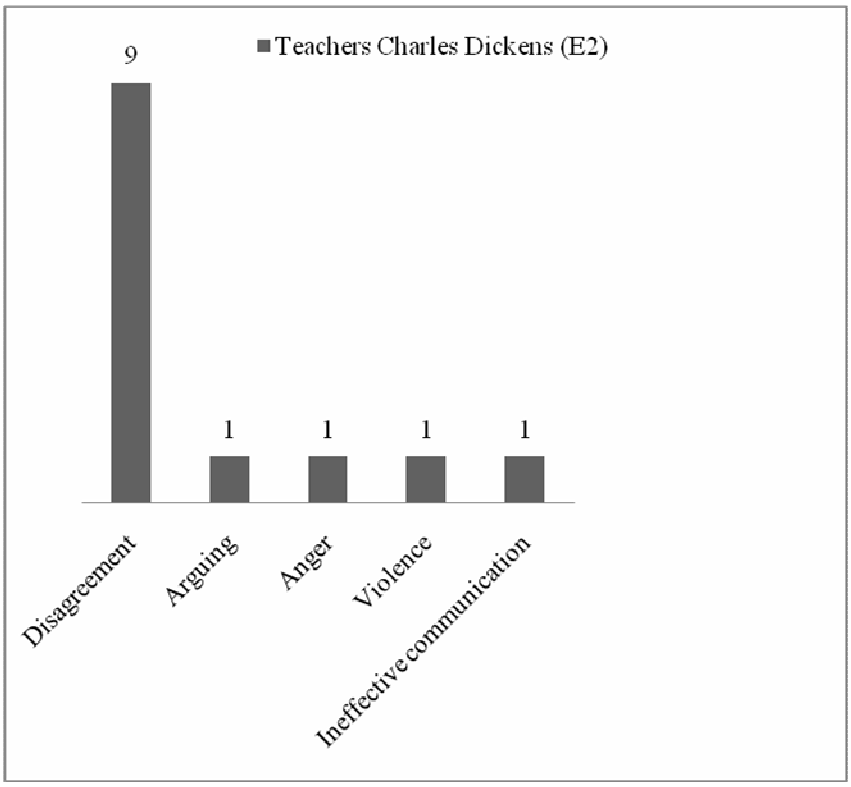
4.2 Teacher findings in Charles Dickens School (E2)

There were a total of 14 completed teacher questionnaires in E2. Of the 14 teachers, 11 were interviewed (not all were interviewed due to time constraints and teacher unavailability). However, there were some discrepancies between the questionnaire and interview responses either because teachers did not complete the questionnaire question or because the interviews were semi-structured; not all teachers were asked exactly the same questions and therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than 14 teachers. Moreover, some questionnaire responses attracted more than 11 response categories as some teachers gave more than one response to a question.

4.2.1 Teacher perceptions of conflict in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: In your opinion what does "conflict" mean?

Questionnaire responses



Missing, N = 1

The table above indicates that most teachers in E2 defined conflict as a *disagreement*. Although some teachers also defined conflict as arguing, anger, violence and ineffective communication, most teachers perceived it to mean a disagreement.

Question: In your opinion what does "conflict" mean?

Interview responses

Disagreement

"Variety, difference of opinion, difference of direction; educationally and socially, a meeting of different levels of age where students who think they deserve respect in my view have to earn it the same way that I have to earn their respect and so the conflict comes where there is a difference of opinion over that."

"Conflict would mean a disagreement in a way that initially may not be resolved."

"A disagreement but slightly more serious than disagreement it means conflict could be the start of something physical. Otherwise it is verbal disagreement but I think it could become more serious."

"Where two parties have their own point of view and then the two points of view disagree. So they disagree with each other."

"Conflict to me is when there is a disagreement between two pupils and they don't seem to almost give the time for the other person to explain their point of view or not willing to understand each other's point of view."

"Conflict is any disagreement between one or more individuals; it can by anything from a difference in values and opinions that lead to discussion which is heated through to physical violence."

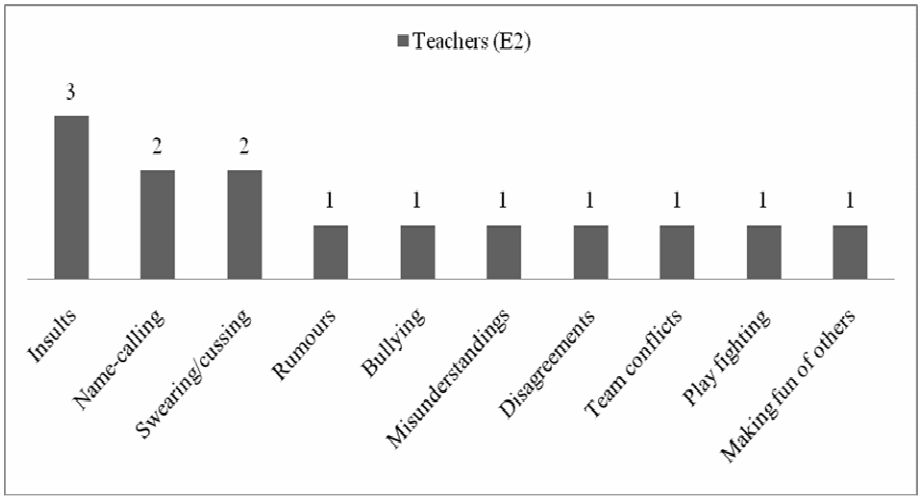
Incompatibility

"Well, I guess conflict could mean where there is stress, anxiety, emotional arousal and you see where somebody is coming into interaction with something or somebody else, which they are not happy with."

The majority of the teachers in E2 defined conflict as a disagreement in their questionnaire responses. The interview responses confirmed the teacher questionnaire responses in that majority of teachers also defined conflict as a disagreement in their interview responses. Therefore we can say that overall, teachers in E2 defined conflict as a disagreement.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in school E2 identified the most common types of pupil conflict as verbal; mainly *insults*, *name-calling* and *swearing*. Some other conflicts that were mentioned as being common included rumours, misunderstandings, disagreements, team conflicts, play fighting and making fun of others.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Tribal/groupings

"Tribal, as in where you come from. In terms of your post code or part of a town that you live in or even part of the estate that you live in … for instance, if I want to take a group and go to Woolwich Dockyard to look at something, there are exhibitions there … um most of my students won't want to go there on a bus on their own. They will go on a minibus and be there and get taken back but they wouldn't want to go on public transport to go there because there are people there who are their arch enemies in terms of they don't live in that area, they live in this area. So you get that tribal conflict."

"You get the conflict in school between various fashion factions. We are a very laid back school so we have what we lovingly call the high grungy element, where students will dress in black clothes with lots of black eye make-up etc. etc. etc. And then we also have a different faction … your chavs and your chavettes, the Burberry crew. There is conflict there because their interests are very polarized. The grungies tend to be stereotypically more academic, artistic, design orientated and chavs are potentially white or black working class students who have an interest in a particular type of music, a particular type of dress and they blend."

Lack of resources/being different

"I teach IT, so there aren't enough computers so there is conflict with getting on computers, there is conflict between them to answer a question quicker than someone else. Maybe someone is different is some way and someone has a go at them being different, it could be racial differences, it could be because they dress differently, because of different sex."

Bullying

"The kind of bullying tends to be physical bullying, verbal conflict, ignoring others, but it is more the physical bullying … getting people out of the way, saying nasty things to their faces, getting gangs of people against each other and picking on them."

Verbal/name-calling

"Verbal conflict, people being deliberatively provocative is one kind of conflict, being abusive or derogatory about people's families, people's sisters, most often people's

mothers. That often is a potential area of conflict that starts as something verbal and then can quite easily become something quite physical but also really hurtful."

"Often it's family, your mum. Any sentence beginning with your mum is a potential area of conflict. I think the verbal conflict can become potentially physical conflict, and I think its physical conflict is the real danger area."

"Name-calling, telling tales, things that are carried in from outside, MSN is a problem especially for our deaf pupils because their English isn't brilliant and therefore things can be misconstrued."

"Name-calling, sexuality… it would be homophobic type name-calling, calling somebody gay and that sort of thing really. I suppose ... over resources or friends, those are probably the biggest ones I guess."

"The use of the word 'gay'."

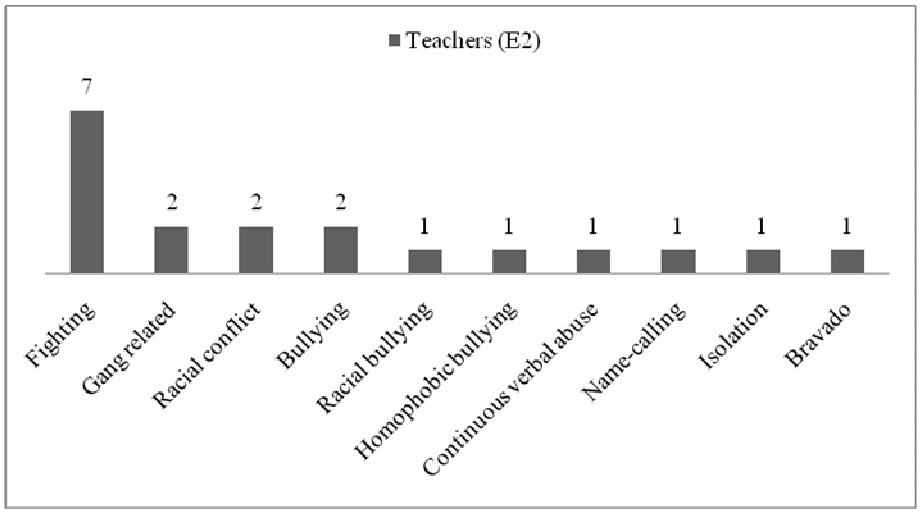
Racial

"Racial conflict."

The teacher interview responses concerning the most common pupil conflicts in their school reaffirmed their questionnaire responses, in that there were a variety of verbal conflicts mentioned with the most common ones being name-calling and insults.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Although there was a variation in teachers' identification of the most serious forms of pupil conflict, there seemed to be a consensus amongst most teachers that

fighting was the most serious pupil conflict in their school. Teachers also seemed to think that bullying was serious; some of the examples of bullying that were thought to be serious were homophobic and racial bullying.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Emotional upset

"It would be where there is a great deal of emotional upset, people are really very upset, maybe they're not coming to school or not going to lessons, so where there is a lot of disruption, a lot of upset and it's affecting what happens day to day. They would all be triggers."

"When the actual person that's in the conflict is visibly upset or shaken and its affecting their life that they can't just walk away from it and leave it, I mean in their heads they can't just leave it."

"Any conflict really, because when you see the students being upset or just not feeling good you have to solve this conflict or at least show to the student that you are aware that there is a problem."

"If it's important to the child it has to be important to you, so to a certain extent you have to respond to the child, if they are looking really upset over the loss of their rubber then you have to try and treat that seriously but you also have to be sensitive enough to recognize that some kids won't make any fuss at all, but will be dying inside. You have to use your common sense, use your experience."

Avoidance

"When they won't talk or listen to each other, and that's when you get the parent in and the year heads involved."

Verbal/Physical

"I think verbal conflict racial, homophobic, I would take those seriously and then physical conflict I would take very seriously, one child attacking another or just any kind of physical conflict. I think that would be the order."

"It's serious if anything physical has happened. If a fight has happened and also when people start leaving, or not being able to come to school, just finding it difficult to go to lessons."

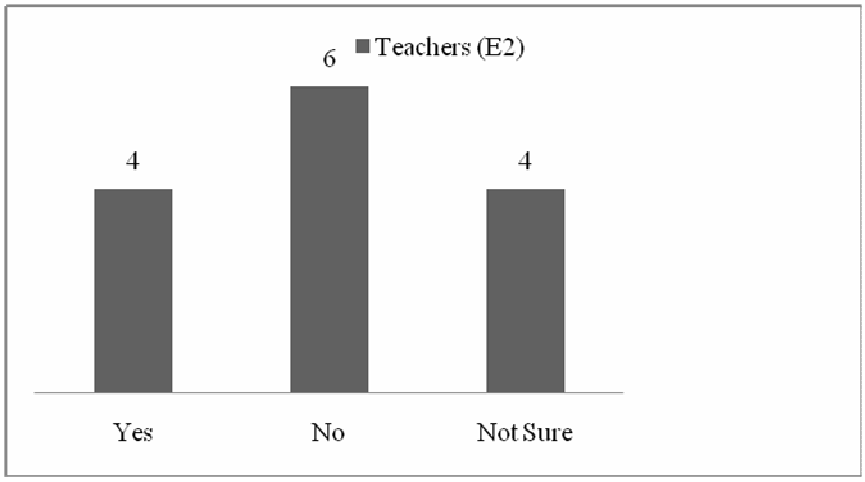
Gut feeling

"When I get a gut feeling, that things aren't appropriate, I think if it's obviously anything explicit or properly damaging."

Again, the teacher interview responses, compared to their questionnaire responses, were similar in that some teachers in their interviews mentioned *fighting* as the most serious pupil conflict in their school, as well as racial and homophobic conflict.

Question: Is self-harming a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Questionnaire responses



The results from the table above shows that there was a varied response from teachers in school E2 when asked if self-harming was a pupil problem in their school. Although a majority of the teachers said that it was not a pupil problem, some were not sure and some did recognize self-harm as a pupil problem.

Question: Is self-harming a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"There are students who self-harm here ... but in the situations I know about, it's generally to do with what's going on at home, rather than perhaps more aggravated, maybe by what's going on in school, but the main problem seems to be some sort of disruption at home."

"I can think of a boy who to look at him you would never think but when he pulls up his shirt sleeves he's sort of cut himself all up his arms … and there's a girl who's got quite bad behaviour problems and difficulty fitting in everywhere and I suppose in a sense her situation is more obvious that you can see immediately that there is a lot distress and things like that, but again cutting up the arms."

"I've seen kids who literally tear their arms apart with anything that is reasonably sharp, compasses, even down to one child took apart her pencil sharpener because it's basically got a little razor back in there, and others that scratch themselves constantly"

"Yeah, oh yeah."

"We've got a student, she is so nervous, so sometimes because she wants to kind of express her feelings and the only way is to scratch herself, so sometimes she can hurt herself of course. There is another student because at home it's not really nice atmosphere, so you know the planner, its plastic, it's kind of tearing, and once it's torn it's like swiped across the arm."

"Yes, in my old tutor group there was a girl who began to self-harm and she had done it in quite a public kind of way. She had taken scissors in English class and she was scoring her wrists but not deep enough to actually break the artery but it's been at a table where other students could she what she was doing. She was wearing the school t-shirt, there was no attempt to disguise. It was virtually a cry for help as a result of what was going on at home for her with parents divorcing and she was just overwhelmed by what was going on and she needed someone to talk to and she didn't know who to talk to and she didn't know how to ask for the support. So it does happen, but it is a rarity."

"Yeah, there have been a few pupils that have self-harmed."

No

"I haven't seen it… I don't think I have heard it about particularly with students at this school. But then again I don't have pastoral role or anything."

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

"Cutting, not eating and there was an incidence with a burn but we weren't sure whether that was self-inflicted."

"The most obvious one would be somebody actually doing damage to their skin, drug taking, underage binge drinking. But I think the most obvious ones that we would see would actually be people making marks on themself, covering their wrists."

Question: Do you think that self-harm is a form of conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"Well, I suppose it is in a way because taking the line that if you are at peace with what's going on in your life, I guess yeah I see that as a conflict, although I suppose it's not a way I would normally think of it, but you are in conflict with those around you, yeah so it would be a conflict.."

"Hmmm…that's interesting, I haven't included that in conflict at all have I? But I can see how self-harm, it's almost a way of expressing conflict in a person's life. I haven't used or thought about conflict in that way, but I think that's another context, isn't it? I don't know enough about self-harmers."

Not necessarily

"I have seen examples of pupils who have self-harmed but not necessarily through conflicts in school, sometimes its conflict at home, sometimes they are not living at home, sometimes they are living in care situations and I think then it is more than conflict. It is a cry for help. In my own teaching environment, maybe I've seen 3 or 4 so not that many."

When asked about whether self-harm was a pupil problem in their school, almost all the teachers in E2 said *yes* in their interview responses. The interview responses are consistent with their questionnaire responses in that overall teachers in E2 recognize self-harm as a pupil problem in their school.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same view of pupil conflict?

Interview responses

Probably not, or at least not all the time

"That's an interesting one because it is difficult to answer fully, I don't suppose they always do and I suppose where it comes really self-evident is where students will say things like 'I'll tell her or I tell him and nothing ever happens', and I guess sometimes that will be true."

"Probably not, well I can't really understand some of the stuff that they are going through and it would be the same the other way around they can't understand why I would be annoyed about certain things as well. To a certain extent I do know but I can't really empathize with some of it, like MSN bullying or bullying on Facebook. I mean I deal with it but I can't really understand it (laughs) because as an adult someone says something to you, you delete it and forget it, where they have to get involved with it and I can't really understand that."

No

"Not really. Because students, when they are in conflict, they are hurt so they are kind of angry, they feel they cannot control themselves, and at the same time they are kids so they need time to learn how to control themselves. And I think sometimes teachers forgot that they are just kids, they need time they cannot be like robots. And also because sometimes teachers doesn't know that these kids have the particular problems at home or its normal if he has this kind of behaviour just have to give him some time" "We have differences in styles, differences in perceptions."

"Maybe not, some children might not and might relish it and think it is normal behaviour and if they're the instigators then they don't share the same view as those receiving it…I think it depends on the situation and the teacher, I like to think that they take things seriously."

Yes

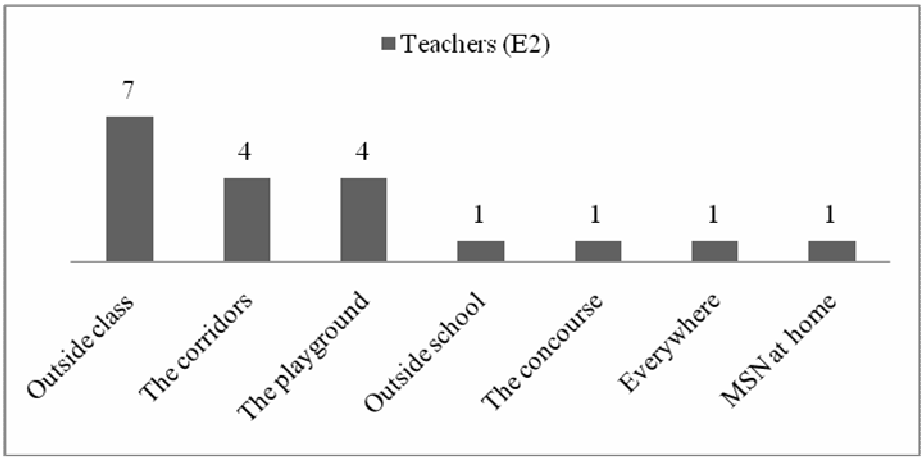
"Yeah, I think they are quite fairly aligned. I think that in general, given exclusion rates and those sorts of things, we get it reasonably right. We are never gonna get it a hundred per cent right. Even in a class of two you are going to get conflict."

"I would hope so, but do they? Yes, I think they do."

The interview responses above indicate that majority of teachers in E2 did not think that teachers and pupils shared the same notions of pupil conflict. This suggests that these teachers believed that teachers and pupils have different perceptions of pupil conflicts.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Questionnaire responses



It appears from the teacher responses above that the majority of teachers believe that most pupil conflicts happen *outside class*. Some teachers mentioned the corridors and the playground. A few teachers believed most pupil conflicts happen outside school, on the concourse, everywhere, and at home.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Interview responses

Different places

"Variety of places, sometimes they spill over into the classroom, but I guess most of them would occur just throughout the school day really, I don't think there is a particular pattern."

Outside

"Usually outside…the local policemen will come in and help out if it gets really nasty."

"Outside of lessons in the school grounds. In the playground, conflict between years."

"The concourse and outside, in the corridors."

"Mostly outside class."

Everywhere

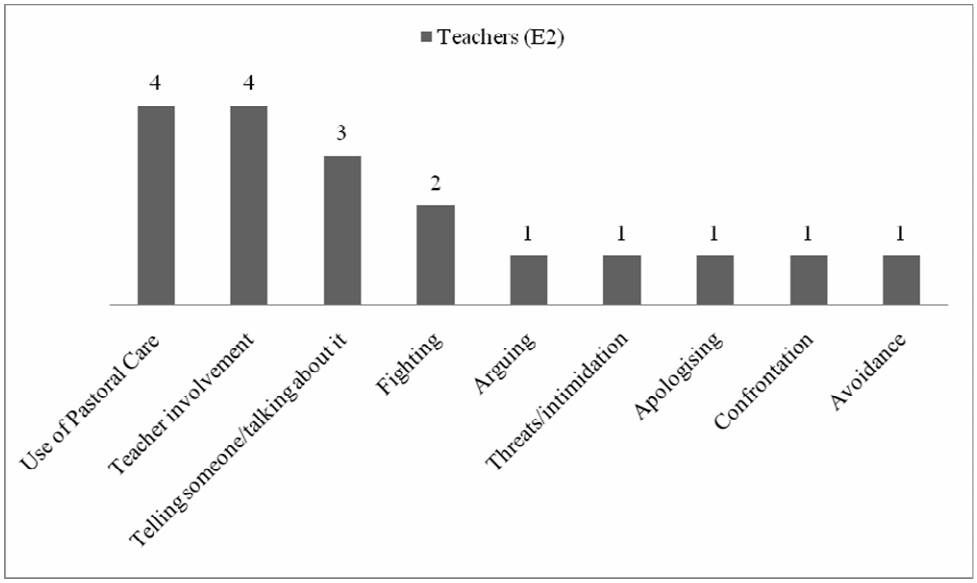
"Everywhere."

The teacher interview responses supported their questionnaire responses in that teachers believed that pupil conflicts happened in a variety of locations, mainly *outside*, but the playground and corridors were also common locations.

4.2.2 Teacher responses to conflict in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Questionnaire responses



While most teachers in E2 believed that pupils solved/managed their conflicts, mainly by using the school's *pastoral care system* or by getting the teachers involved, other teachers believed that pupils solved their conflicts by telling someone or talking about it. Some teachers also believed that pupils resolved their conflicts by fighting. Other teacher responses included arguing, threats/intimidation, confrontation and avoidance.

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Anger/ aggressiveness

"Being aggressive."

"I see a lot of confrontation and I think that there is the general air of anger, people get upset very easily and are quick to react."

Violence

"Some better than others … some can't deal with it and they either go off the wire and start getting really violent or they start not attending school or they start misbehaving in school."

Use of the school facilities

"For the students I know, they would go to the support area."

"I think most of the kids respond as we like them to do which is to use the mechanisms that are in place in the pastoral system go get the help that they need in an appropriate way. Some students don't use that mechanism and they respond directly to conflict, verbal conflict, and escalated conflict. The students are more likely to come to us than rather than having to try to resolve what they have to resolve themselves."

"I think they are supportive of their friends, and would know that conflicts will be dealt with by teachers or tutors or counsellors or mentors, that there would be enough people here that they could talk to about it. Perhaps that's wishful thinking but I think that's the case."

It depends on the gender of the pupil(s)

"It depends on the students and most of the boy students of course want to show that they can be tough … they are not these kind of boys that will tell the teacher. Girls are more … miss, sir … it depends boys or girls. It depends if it is SEN [special educational

needs] kids as well. Even though it's a girl, if she has problems at home, she will react really violently because it's her way to express herself to show that she can control that… you know … it depends, backgrounds of the kids and also if they are boys or girls."

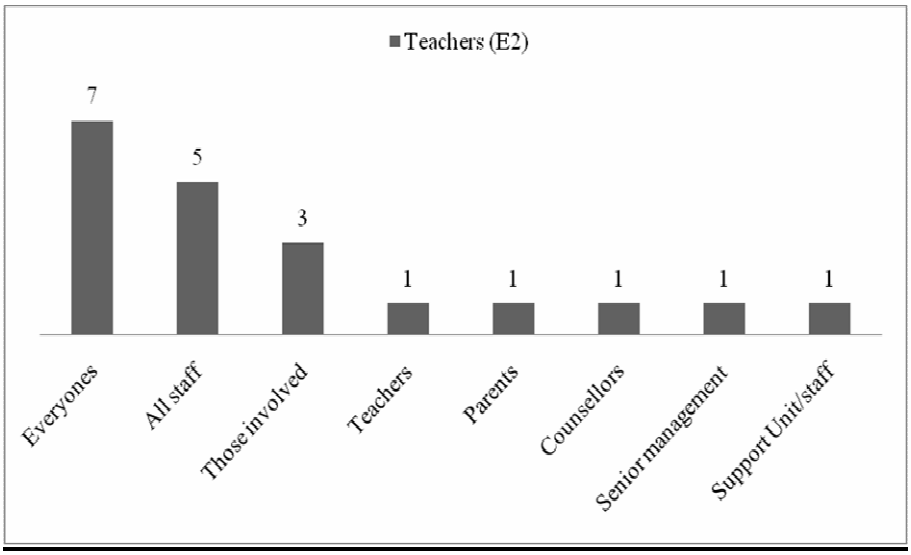
It depends on the person

"I think it varies depending on the person. Some will go into physical fight or calling names. I think some might try to avoid it or speak to their friends or speak to the teachers."

The teacher interview responses above seem to be consistent with the questionnaire responses that teachers perceive pupils utilize a variety of resources to reduce and/or manage their conflicts.

Question: Whose responsibility do you think it is to reduce/manage pupil conflict(s) in your school?

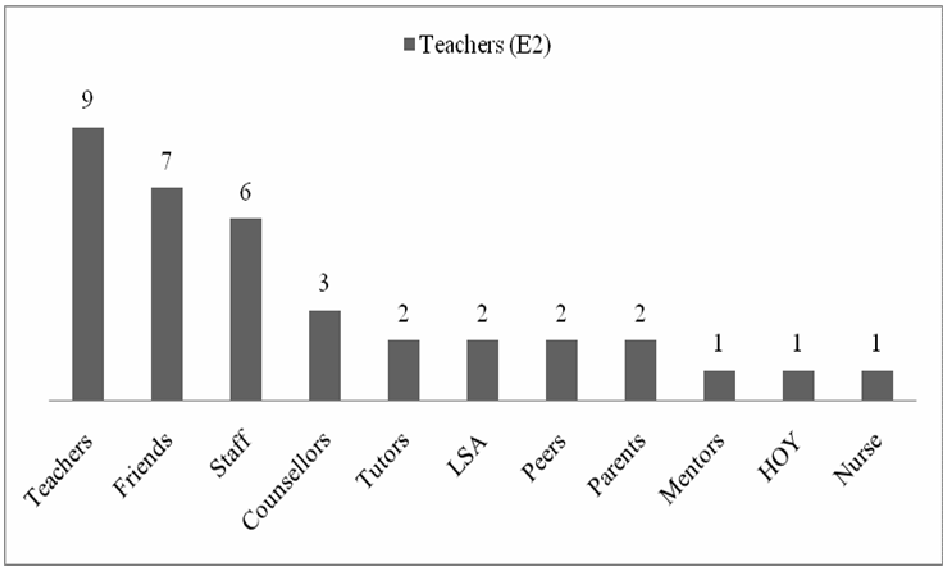
Questionnaire responses



In E2, most teachers believed that *everyone* was responsible for reducing/managing pupil conflicts in their schools. The second most mentioned response was *all staff* which was followed by *those pupils involved in the conflicts*. A few teachers felt that teachers, parents, counsellors, senior management and the support unit staff were responsible for reducing/managing pupil conflicts in their school.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Questionnaire responses



There was a wide range in teacher response rates between whom they thought that pupils would turn to if they had a problem at school. All teachers felt that pupils would turn to *teachers* if they had a problem at school; this response was followed by *friends*, *staff* and *counsellors*. Other teacher responses included tutors, LSA's (learning support assistants), peers, parents, mentors, HOY and the school nurse.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Interview responses

It varies

"I think that would vary according to the pupil … if it was in the lesson, it would be to the teacher, it would be to their friends perhaps and I think there is a danger area there because you can get little gangs of boys. So there are teachers, friends, and tutors."

"A variety of people really, they could talk to their tutor about it because the tutors stay with them for the time of their secondary schooling, so they build up some sort of relationship with them."

"Normally they go to a teacher of some sort and maybe if it gets escalated then they go to a year head, and sometimes I suppose pupils will go to their peers and try to sort out some types of conflict."

"If they had friends they would turn to their friends or a particular member of staff that they trusted. So there is always someone they can get to quite quickly."

"They might go to their peers if they think that it could get sorted out, if it's a group issue. There is a bullying teacher and a lot of kids go to him … their tutors in the younger years, years seven and eight."

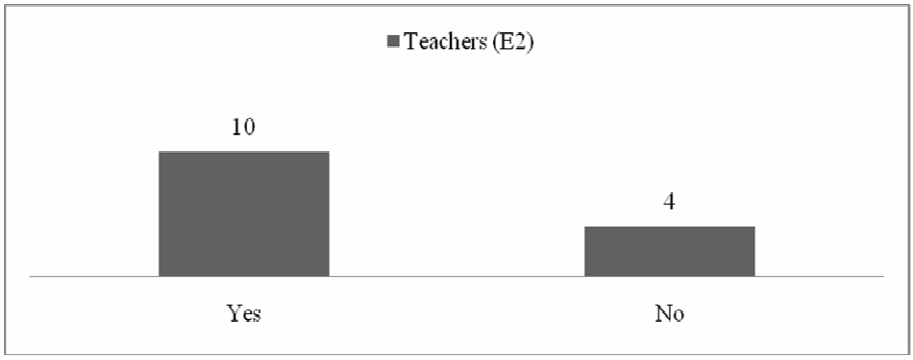
"Mainly the ones that are involved in the conflict, the adults that were near the conflict, but if we didn't know anything, if nobody was a witness to the conflict, it's mainly the Learning Support Assistants, the assistants, not really the teachers, they kind of trust more the helpers."

"We do have a pastoral care system in this school that is very good. It does underpin the success of this school."

The teacher interview questions for who pupils would turn to if they had a problem at school yielded that teachers perceive that pupils turn to different people, depending on the conflict and the pupil. One teacher said that pupils would not turn to teachers if they had a problem at school and one teacher did not answer the question; it asked who pupils would turn to if they had a problem at school, and this teacher responded by saying that they have a very good pastoral care system. Rather than to answer the question directly, this teacher commented on their school's pastoral care system and its effectiveness.

Question: Do you think the staff at your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses



Almost all (10) of the teachers in E2 said they believed that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts. Having said that, there were a just a few teachers (4) who did not feel that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts.

Question: Do you think the staff in your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

They do what they can

"Well, I suppose neither here nor anywhere else ever does a hundred per cent. But I think one of the biggest problems is time constraints to repair or rebuild so that there will be some sort of conflict that will go unresolved simply because of pressure of time."

"I feel they're probably doing what they can within their capabilities and I feel that there are some students that however hard you try they don't care about any punishment, they don't care about you know, any teacher kind of telling them off or trying to resolve it. It's not in their personality or ability at the moment to take on responsibility for not being nasty. I think that kind of stuff has to come from home, and it's really hard that you only have a certain capability within the school to actually try and remedy these behaviours."

It depends on the teacher (s)

"It depends on the teachers. Some teachers sometimes they just want to close their eyes, they hear things but they don't react because they are busy or they know that if they stop and react to these conflicts it would take energy, they would have to deal with it, they would have to write a report. So sometimes they just go along and don't say anything."

No

"*No I don't. I think some people will walk down corridors and then walk down behind staff and some senior staff and I've watched them walk past all kinds of infringements everything from a child having a cap on or a coat on and they ignore that through to kids who are facing off against each other and again they walk past it because they don't want to be involved with it. Some staff do not take the responsibility that they should have, they do not take that responsibility and they leave it to others and so you do find that there is a mixed response."*

Yes

"Yes."

The teacher interview responses yielded a variety of opinions about whether teachers felt that the staff at their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts. It was interesting to read that some teachers felt that the staff could do more, but that some staff simply ignore some pupil conflicts because they do not want to get involved.

4.2.3 Teacher awareness of school policies in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

Anti-bullying, homophobic, racial and behavioural policies

"There is an anti-bullying policy, and there are guidelines and policies that deal with a whole range of behavioural issues, approaches to what to do that type of thing."

"Yeah, we've got policies on anti-bullying, there is our policies on homophobia etc. They are all in place."

"We've got the usual policies that are in effect, but there isn't a conflict policy. You know like we've got the bullying policy, we've got behaviour policies, we've got how you are supposed to behave during lessons, how you are supposed to be on rapport, that sort of thing. But there are bits in there that will help to resolve conflict. So there isn't one specific policy dealing with conflict."

"We have a bullying policy, for instance homophobic comments, racial comments and obviously those are set up more or less by the borough and the school implements the borough's policy. And all of these things are also written in the children's planner that they get in year seven."

"We've got a lot of policies. If something happens in the classroom, the teacher has to react. And if the teacher cannot do anything about it, then it has to be the Head of Faculty. If it happens in maths then it's the Head of Faculty in maths. If something happens in the corridor it's the Head of Year that has to give the students the punishment. If it happens outside it's also the Head of Year, and depending on if the conflict is important or not then it could be the Head of Year and teacher."

Not sure

"I am not sure whether there is anything actually written down. I know that if it's is a bullying situation there is a policy and there are people employed that you can go to. I think generally the staff are pretty good at stopping things that they are aware of."

"I don't know. I think they must do."

Most teachers that were interviewed in E2 were aware of the school policies in their schools, apart from two. The policy mentioned the most was an anti-bullying policy and one teacher said that they do not have a conflict policy *per se*.

Question: Do you think that these policies are helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes I do. I think that the conflict management has been okay"

"Yeah because it gives staff a framework and students a framework to work within. I am a believer in boundaries, believer in letting people know where things start and where things stop."

"Yes, I think it's made a difference…I think them knowing that there are people to go to and they don't need to sort things out themselves if they can't…they could go to their tutor if they wanted to, or the two members of staff in charge of managing bullying."

"I think they are because you know where to go. There will always be somebody to talk to about a conflict, and depending on the place where the conflict appeared we know. So the students already know."

The majority of the responses to this question were succinct, in that teachers believed that the school policies were helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts. However there were occasional instances where the teachers did not appear to answer the question appropriately. It could be the case that they did not fully understand or listen to the question. Below is an example:

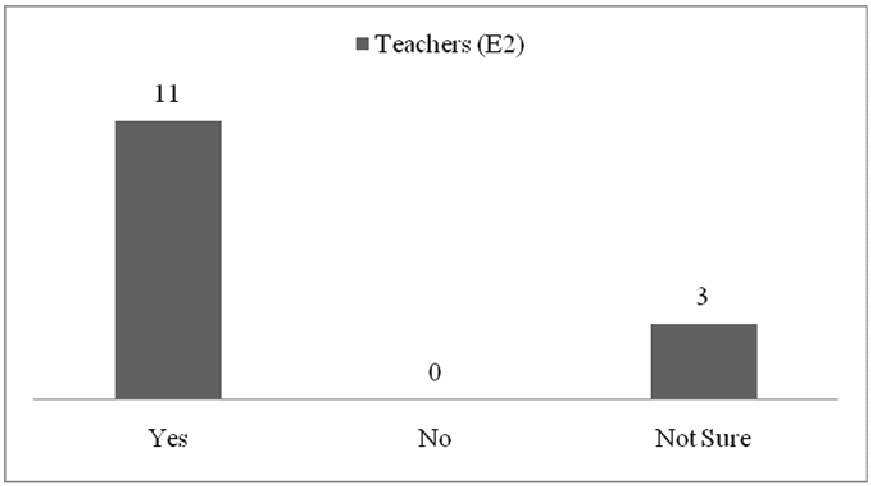
"I think most times if I feel there's pupil conflict, I'll try and deal with it myself by having the two individuals there are trying to make them see the error of their ways and be watchful afterwards."

This teacher did not directly respond to the question. It could be inferred that they did not understand the question fully, in that their response explains the process that this particular teacher goes through to combat conflict, as opposed to addressing the policies. Below is another example of a teacher who did not directly respond to the question:

"If you were to stop every incidence of a child calling another child a name you would have a queue outside of the head's office with 400 students. Because part of growing up is how you deal with language, how you deal with how people talk to you and how you talk to them and in a playground situation you'll get every little nuance of what relationships happen. 12 and 13 year old fall in and out of love every day and that's conflict. I believe in letting them deal with a lot of it themselves, but making sure that it is managed. Make sure that there is always that escape."

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

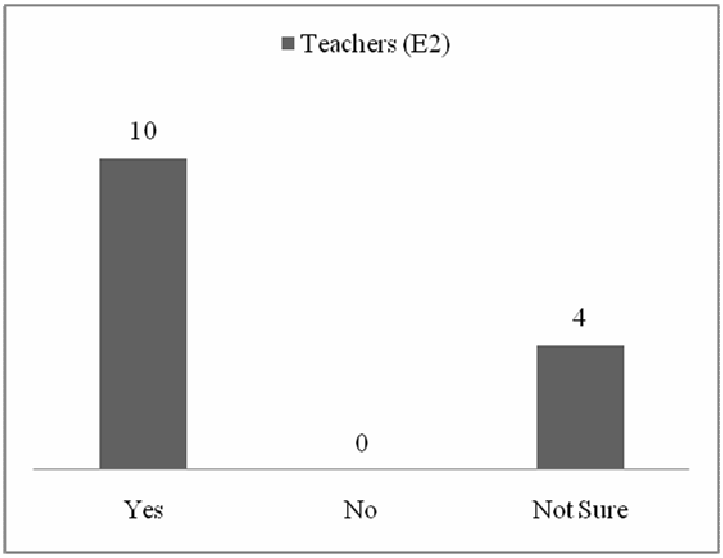
Questionnaire responses



The question above sought to examine whether teachers were aware of the anti-bullying policy in their school. The responses indicate that most teachers were aware of this policy, apart from three teachers who were not sure.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses



The responses above from the teacher questionnaires in E2 suggest that although most teachers in E2 believed that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies at their school, there were a few who were not sure.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

No

"No they don't"

"They talk about this is PHSE. The policies are already made. I don't think that they involve kids into, no I don't think they ask them."

Yes

"Yeah people are consulted and I suppose technically everybody has the ability to input into the policy in some way or another, but again there's so many policies and schools are busy places so what will happen is that a committee will be put together that will write the draft of it and it would be put out for consultation. And I suppose where people have time they will read and respond."

"Yeah, definitely, they were integral with it, they were actually the people who put most of it together. _____(the borough) was developing their anti-bullying policy and when they didn't want to spend the money, we carried on and did it ourselves … student voice is high on the agenda. We've got student governors, we've got student mentors, we've got students who have gone to work in the schools counselling, we've got students that learn sign language because they want to include their deaf peers and they want to be able to talk to them. It's as inclusive as it can get without going too far."

"They have. There is a teacher here who got really involved in the beat bullying campaign, we have a blue day every year and you dress up in blue, you paint your face blue, your hair goes blue, everything goes blue and it brings awareness to it. We have got some bullying supervisors, teachers who are mentors and they get people involved and there is some pupil mentors underneath them and they get involved as well and they try to mediate … and I think they were involved in certain parts of creating the bullying policy and I think the school council get involved with that sort of stuff as well."

"Yes. And there's also the school council that would address problems like bullying if they felt that it wasn't dealt with they could take that through the school council or the year council cause there is the year council and the school council. There are also counsellors, there is a school counselling service so if anybody was having particular problems with say a particular group of people."

Not sure

"No… I don't know."

"I would imagine that they did have but I don't know for sure I know that there are a lot of people involved with it."

The majority of the teachers in the interviews said that pupils did have a say in the anti-bullying policies at their schools. This figure corresponds to the teacher questionnaire responses, where a majority of the teachers also said that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies at their school. Moreover, one teacher said that he felt that "if" pupils were asked for their input then he was sure that it would be considered, which suggests that they aren't asked. He said:

"I think that if we were asked for our opinion then they would be likely to accepting it, I am sure that they are open to suggestion."

The teacher interview responses to this question yielded more response categories than their questionnaire responses. In the interview responses there were some teachers who said *no* to pupils having a say in the anti-bullying policies at their school.

4.2.4 Summary of teacher findings in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Perceptions of conflict

The results from the teacher responses in school E2 show agreement between teacher questionnaire and interview responses. In terms of perceptions of conflict, their definitions and perceptions of the most common pupils conflicts was verbal. Most teachers in E2 defined conflict as disagreement. As for perceptions of the most common pupil conflicts in their school, the consensus was these were verbal; mainly insults, name-calling and swearing. Most teachers in E2 also perceived the most serious pupil conflict to be physical.

The majority of teachers said that fighting was the most serious pupil conflict in their school. There was a discrepancy in teacher questionnaire and interview responses when asked whether self-harm was a pupil conflict that existed in their school; in their questionnaire responses most teachers said that it was not a pupil problem, yet in their interview responses most teachers said that it was a pupil problem. This difference could account for the fact that not all the teachers who filled out the questionnaire were interviewed and therefore their responses could have been different. However, the fact that, overall, a lot of teachers said that self-harm was a pupil problem shows that some teachers are aware that some pupils do self-harm in their school. In terms of the location of conflict teachers agreed that most pupil conflicts happened outside lessons or class.

Teachers were also asked if they felt that teachers and pupils at their school shared the same views of pupil conflicts. Their responses indicated that majority of teachers felt that pupils and teachers had different perceptions of pupil conflicts.

Responses to conflict

When it came to the response section of the questionnaires and interviews, the teachers' replies were also consistent. For example when asked to mention ways that pupils resolve or manage their conflicts, most teachers in E2 said that pupils manage their conflicts by using the pastoral care system or by getting teachers involved. Teachers were then asked who they thought pupils would talk to if they had a problem at school, and the majority of them said teachers, followed by friends and staff. Moreover, when asked who they thought were responsible for reducing or managing pupil conflicts in their school, most teachers said *everyone's*. Teachers were also asked if teachers thought the staff at their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts, to which most of them said *yes*.

School policies

When it came to teacher perceptions of school policies, teacher questionnaire and interview responses were also consistent. The results indicate that most teachers were aware of the policies in their school. When teachers were first asked if their school had any policies, it was to examine their awareness of the topic. The teacher responses indicates that most, if not all of the teachers were aware of a behavioural and an anti-bullying policy in their school. When asked if they felt that these policies were helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts, most teachers said *yes*, and when the teachers were later asked if their school specifically had an anti-bullying policy, the majority of them also said *yes*; when further asked if they felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies a majority again agreed. Thus, overall, teachers showed awareness of the policies in their school and felt that these policies were helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts; they also felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

4.3 Pupil findings in Edward Elgar School (E1)

There were a total of 91 completed pupil questionnaires from Edward Elgar School, E1. Of the 91 pupils, 10 were interviewed (based on availability and time). However, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses either because some pupils did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, and/or because the interviews were semi-structured; not all pupils were asked exactly the same questions and therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than ten pupils.

4.3.1 Pupil perceptions of conflict in Edward Elgar School (E1)

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	62.6%
Arguing	24.1%
Disagreeing	10.9%
Name-calling	5.4%
Holding a grudge	5.4%

The majority of pupils in E1 defined conflict as *fighting*. The second most popular definition was *arguing*, which was followed by *disagreeing*, *name-calling* and *holding a grudge*. Other responses (<5.0%) included; violence, swearing, insults, bullying, war, disliking, tension, falling out, racism and teasing.

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Interview responses

Fighting

"Fighting … physical violence."

"When someone is starting to fight and then it's getting worse every second and then they suddenly collide with each other."

"Fighting."

"The most common is probably fighting … punching and kicking."

"Sometimes people punch each other or hit each other."
"Arguing or fighting and anti-social behaviour."

Bullying

"Conflict means when someone is bullying to you or you have been bullying by someone else ... bullying is when someone is calling you names, or just not respecting you or it's the way you look and they are making fun of you the way you look, it's just stuff that hurt your feelings."

Verbal

"Calling names."

"An argument between two people or more than two people it could be a group … also it could be not talking to each other, that tension between people … we see it loads of times but we see it like different scales, like you see violent conflict, like if two friends have just split and they were best friends then you immediately see like two whole classes not really getting along … major conflicts are between males mostly and then minor conflicts will probably be females."

"Conflict between best friends, and if someone called someone names … first someone might start arguing in class and then when they come outside they are getting really aggressive to each other … or it might just start outside from anywhere … sometimes someone might argue, someone might insult someone, and then the other person gets really angry and then sometimes they just go outside and then when they get really angry they become violent and then they might start punching the other person … this is more common no one bullies in this school that's as far as I know."

The pupil interview responses were similar to their questionnaire responses in that majority of pupils also defined conflict as fighting in their interviews, followed by arguing. They also defined conflict as name-calling and bullying in their interview responses.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	42.8%
Name-calling	12.0%
Arguing	8.7%
Swearing	8.7%
Insults	5.4%

According to pupils in E1, the most common pupil conflict at their school is *fighting*. The conflict that was mentioned the second most by pupils was *name-calling*, which was followed by *arguing*, *swearing* and *insults*. Other responses (<5.0%) included; bullying, racism, over football, back chatting, cussing, verbal abuse, mocking, not liking one another, and disrespect.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Physical-fighting

"Fighting."

"They are getting really aggressive and it might lead to punching…first someone might start arguing in class and then when they come outside they are getting really aggressive to each other…or it might just start outside from anywhere."

"The most common is probably fighting…punching and kicking."

"Hitting each other, violence."

"Conflict between best friends, say someone didn't do something for them and then they will have conflict between that, and there also conflict like if someone called someone names."

Verbal

"Calling names."

The pupil interview responses on the most common pupil conflicts confirmed their interview responses, as most pupils also mentioned fighting to be the most

common pupil conflict during their interviews. Like the questionnaires, fighting was followed by name-calling in the interviews. Thus, it appears that pupils in E1 perceived fighting to be the most common pupil conflict in their school.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	46.1%
Racism	7.6%
Bullying	6.5%

Based on the pupil questionnaire responses above, most pupils in E1 believed that the most serious pupil conflict in their school was *fighting*. Two pupils (2.2%) said "people bleeding from their face/and body." One pupil (1.1 %) said "when they have proper fights with punches and kicks." Other responses (<5.0%) included; name-calling, mocking, arguing, swearing, un-loyal mates, and vandalism and bleeding from the face and/or body.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Physical – fighting

"A physical fight…when it's too much, when you just can't take it anymore, when it's just crossed the line…too much of calling names or talking about the way you look it's just too much, bullying you every single day."

"Fighting."

"Fighting is the most serious."

Verbal/Physical

"When they start swearing and that and then they get angry and they start fighting."

"Say if someone plays football and then another person tries to take the ball or something and many people don't know that someone's taken their balls then then they'll probably try to beat them in front of their friends but then it could end up in serious consequences afterwards."

"If someone gonna kind of jump on each other or they're gonna start really badly insulting or swearing at each other."

It depends on the person/situation

"Depending on who it is, like my best friend I don't mind, we can muck about but it's when it comes that you realize that they actually mean it and you can tell if you don't get along with that person or if they are not smiling around. Even if it's someone that is meaning to be horrible, even if they smile you can still tell by the person they are and the way you get along with them, because if it was a random person and they were joking I wouldn't take that as a joke. I would think it's serious."

With regards to the most serious pupil conflict, most pupils in E1 mentioned fighting as the most serious pupil conflict in their interview responses. Also, the pupil interview responses corresponded to their questionnaire responses, suggesting that most pupils in E1 perceived fighting to be the most serious type of pupil conflict in their school.

Question: Have you ever self-harmed?

Questionnaire responses

		Edward Elgar
Yes	Count	1
	%	1.1%
No	Count	72
	%	81.8%
Not sure	Count	15
	%	17.0%
Total	Count	88
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N=3

Most pupils in E1 said *no* to ever having self-harmed; 17.0% were not sure and 1.1% admitted to self-harming. What is concerning about these findings is that although 1.1% may seem like a low percentage of pupils to admit to self-harming, the fact remains that this figure suggests that self-harm does happen in E1. Also, the fact that 17.0% of pupils in E1 were not sure whether they had self-harmed or not is disturbing, as those pupils may have self-harmed or may still be self-harming but may not aware

that they are doing it either because they do not know what self-harm is or because they did not understand the question properly.

Apart from finding out whether pupils self-harmed, and whether they knew the meaning of the term, and in order to get a deeper and better understanding behind the reasons why some pupils self-harmed, pupils were also asked ***why*** they self-harmed in the questionnaires. The responses from pupils across all schools were noted. The responses from pupils in each of the schools have been placed according to reason categories derived from the pupils themselves. Below are responses from the one pupil who admitted to self-harming in E1.

Question: Why did you self-harm?

Interview responses

Anger

"Because I was angry."

The one pupil who admitted to self-harming in E1 said the reason why she self-harmed was because she was angry.

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

"Like when you hurt yourself."

Question: Where does most pupil conflicts happen?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Playground	61.5%
Outside school	14.2%
In the classroom	13.1%

In E1 there seems to be a consensus amongst a majority of pupils that most pupil conflicts happen in the *playground*. Their responses (<5.0%) included: everywhere, in

the ball area, near the bench area, backstairs, corner of school, in the toilets, in the park, at the main site, in the corridors, and in the canteen.

Question: Where does most pupil conflicts happen?

Interview responses

Playground/classroom/outside

"Mostly in the classroom and playground."

"It's normally either in the classroom or in the playground or outside the school gates."

"In the classrooms, mostly and in the playgrounds most people stay put of each other's way if they know they are in trouble."

"Mostly in the playground and there's a no ball area…or anywhere in the playground mostly."

"They usually take place in the playground."

"Sometimes in the playground or in the park(the one right next to the school) and sometimes people arrange it…after school when no one is around then they fight."

"In the classroom and the playground."

The pupil interview responses to where most pupil conflicts happen coincides with the questionnaire responses, thus, overall pupils in E1 perceived most pupil conflicts to happen in the playground.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same views of pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yeah."

"Yeah."

"Yeah, yeah they do."

"Most of the teachers understand some of them don't."

Some do

"It depends…Some teachers do, like the younger members of staff have a good idea of what conflict is and stuff but then like the older members not really because they are mostly focused on, their conflicts are like mostly bullying and stuff like that. Whilst if a younger teacher had name-calling in the class-room it won't be that bad cause of everyone's friends in the classroom, but then if it was someone like name-calling in the playground then probably yeah the teachers would recognize that as something bad."

No

"No."

"Not sure, really, I think that they might not quite understand the reasons why some of us have conflict."

I asked this pupil to elaborate on her answer so that I could get a better idea about why she did not feel that teachers and pupils shared the same ideas of conflict. She was asked *how* the pupils and teachers notions of pupil conflicts were different, to which she replied:

"Some of the teachers, a member of staff, one person I think she understands the pupils more cause she actually takes her time out to go and speak to the pupils. But then there are other teachers who just assume it's just really pretty simple things but really sometimes they are not, sometimes they are really complex issues you know with people outside school … some teachers do and some teachers don't."

The pupil was then asked if she did have a say, how she would get teachers more involved so they understood pupil conflict better. She replied:

"I think some teachers it's just how their personality, it's just how they are, cause some people are just not open-minded and are very closed minded about certain things. Because they think that certain pupils are from certain background or a certain area, they are obviously going to behave or think in a certain way, so they don't perceive the fact that it's a complex issue … Everybody in this school is from a different background … ethnic background, social background and things like that."

When asked if she felt that having different backgrounds was the reason why teachers did not get involved, she replied:

"Obviously they have to get involved because it is their job, but I think the way they get involved and the way they work around the situation, I don't think it's in a very positive way, I think that they should actually try to understand people before they can actually go and understand the problem."

The pupil was asked how they suggested that teachers can understand pupils better. She replied:

"Ethnic training, I think it's called ethnic diversity, it's a training for staff, and basically what they do they just teach you about different people and try to make you a more open-minded person.

Similarly, another female pupil disagreed that teachers and pupils share the same ideas of pupil conflict. She said:

"They [teachers] have their own idea, but they don't really know what we [pupils] are going through."

When asked what the pupil thought that teachers or staff could do better, she replied:

"They could ask 'how are you feeling?' or something like that."

A majority of pupils in E1 said that they felt that teachers and pupils shared the same notions of pupil conflict.

4.3.2 Pupil responses to conflict in Edward Elgar School (E1)

Question: Most conflicts can be resolved by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Talking about them/telling someone	46.1%
Making-up	9.8% * (hugging, shaking hands, solving it, dealing with it reasonably, & communicating)
Fighting	7.6%

When asked how most conflicts can be resolved, almost half the pupils in E1 said by *talking about them/telling someone*. Some pupils mentioned *making up* and *fighting*. Other responses (with <5.0%) included; anger management classes, name-calling, no violence, not arguing, avoidance and apologizing.

Question: Pupils settle their conflicts at my school by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	42.8%
Talking about them/telling someone	24.1%

When asked how pupils settled their conflicts at school, the most frequent pupil response was *fighting*, followed by talking. Other responses (with <5.0%) included; HOY, with those involved, cussing, swearing, screaming, avoiding, cooling down, bullying other students, anger management, arguing, apologizing and getting help.

Question: When I fall out with someone, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Avoid them	45.0%
Reconcile/make up	23.0%

The most frequent pupil response to what they do when they fall out with someone is to *avoid* them. The second most repeated pupil response was to *make up*. Other responses (with <10.0%) included; fighting, feeling guilty, getting angry, swearing, and crying.

Question: When someone falls out with me, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Avoid them	35.1%
Make up/solve the problem	32.9%

The table above shows that there are two main actions that pupils in E1 take when someone falls out with them: *avoid them* or to *make up with them*. However, slightly more pupils said that they would avoid someone if that someone fell out with

them. Other responses (with <5.0%) included; fighting, exchanging words with them, swearing at them, feeling upset and sad, and cry.

Question: How do you respond to most of the conflicts that you experience?

Interview responses

Avoid them

"I don't really respond to it. It just goes away. If you think about it too much then it gets into an issue. Unless the other person wants to take it further, if the other person wants to take it further then you probably need to go to a teacher then, that's what I do."

Solve them with the person involved

"I'm not really a hard-headed person and I don't get angry quickly, I just tend to stay calm, I let the other person cool down and when they've cooled down I will confront them in a calm way, and I'll ask them you know why we fell out and ask them what we should do next as people and if they decide that they don't want to speak to me again then so be it."

Speak to a teacher

"I just go and tell a teacher to come and sort out the fighting … After speaking to the teacher I just try forgetting about it and so it's out of my head."

Friends

"Yeah it does a little bit help when I talk to my friends because I have a friend that really helps me when I have been bullied, she tells the bullies off, not to do it so I feel really safe talking to my friends."

The pupil interview responses to how they respond to most of the conflicts that they experience consisted of responses such as talking to friends, teachers, avoid them, and solving them with the person involved. From these responses it appears that different pupils have different ways of responding to conflicts.

Question: It is…….'s responsibility to manage pupil conflict at my school

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Teacher	43.9%
Those involved	14.2%
Staff	9.8%
The school	7.6%
Head of Year (HOY)	6.5%

Most pupils in E1 felt that it was mainly a *teacher's* responsibility to manage pupil conflicts in their school. Some pupils also felt that the *staff*, the *school* and *HOY* were responsible for the management of pupil conflicts. Other responses (<5.0%) included; everyone, and management.

Question: Do you think the adults at your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses

Country			Edward Elgar
England	Yes	Count	19
		% within school	21.8%
	No	Count	38
		% within school	43.7%
	Not sure	Count	30
		% within school	34.5%
	Total	Count	87
		% within school	100.0%

Total missing, N = 4

A noteworthy proportion of students in E1 felt the adults at their school were not doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts. Some pupils seemed unsure as to

whether the adults at their school were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflict. Only 21.8% of pupils felt that the adults at their school were doing enough.

Question: Do you think the adults at your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes and no

"I think only so much can be done. And in a way they are doing enough, but in a way it's up to the parents as well to sort of teach their children how to prevent their anger and not to pick a fight with somebody because you don't like what they are wearing."

Yes

"Yeah."

"Yeah."

"Yeah, teachers kind of step in as well so they help stop the fighting."
"When they know about a conflict, they are quick to sort it out and they do, but they don't always know, so they can't do much."

No

"Not really but some of them are you know. Some teachers are just not bothered."

"Not much because they just say they stop it but they exclude them for a few days but then pupils start again so then they don't stop it permanently."

When asked what they recommend teachers do better, some pupils said:

"If they [pupils] have a fight or something they could sort it out even by going to a room and talking about it not use physical harm [referring to the pupils]."

"The more the bullying is stopped the better the school will be a place to learn so I would talk to the head teacher or if it's too much, have that person permanently excluded."

The pupil interview responses reflected their questionnaire responses in that some pupils felt that the teachers were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflict, while others did not.

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Friends	29.6%
Family	14.2%
Head of Year (HOY)	12.0%
Teachers	10.9%
Nobody	10.9%
Form tutor	8.7%
Head teacher	5.4%

According to the pupil questionnaire responses above, most pupils in E1 said that they would talk to their *friends* if they had a problem at school. Other responses (<5.0%) included; older people, staff, the person involved. Two pupils (2.1%) said "teachers don't help," and one pupil (1.0%) said "rarely teachers."

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Interview responses

Friends

"My friends."

"One of my teachers, she is a really good friend of mine."

"I wouldn't really talk to anyone, probably my friend."

"I usually tell my friends, no one else."

"I talk to my friend basically because she has experienced the same things as I have, so like we have the same feelings."

"Probably my mates."

Avoid it

"First I would let them walk away and then if I get really angry then I might just kind of insult them or just go to the teacher and tell on them…if I get really angry I might say you are stupid as well or back to you but if I don't get really angry I might just tell the teacher or someone."

Teachers/friends

"I would talk to the teachers I am comfortable with, that I am very close with or the Head teacher."

"I'd feel comfortable talking to a friend or a teacher."

Most pupils said that they would talk to their *friends* if they had a problem at school. The interview responses above corresponded positively to the pupil questionnaire responses to the same question, where most pupils also said that they would talk to their friends if they had a problem at school. Thus, overall most pupils in E1 would rather speak to their friends as opposed to teachers or Heads, if they had a problem at school.

4.3.3 Pupil awareness of school policies in Edward Elgar School (E1)

Question: Does your school have any policies to deal with conflict?

Interview responses

"Internal exclusions and day to day exclusions like two days, four days, or calling your parents…internal is like when you are in a different place, not with your class, but on school grounds."

"Yeah, they have like a non-bully policy, they also have stuff like if you carry a knife or if you want to hurt someone then you will probably get permanently excluded, and you will get in trouble like exclusions, and detentions, and home rooms and stuff."

"We have an anti-bullying policy that tells you what happens if you bully someone."

Not sure

"I'm not sure."

"I'm not sure they might, because I don't really catch up on these things."

"No. I really don't know."

"I think they have, but I might not have been in on that day."

"I think so I am not sure. I don't know."

Most pupils in E1 were not sure whether there school had any polices that dealt with pupil conflicts. A few mentioned an anti-bullying policy and one pupil mentioned exclusions.

Question: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Not really

"Yeah, but then if you think about it some of the sanctions are not that harsh to stop people from doing it … if someone has said that if you beat this person up the only thing you will get is detention then you probably won't really think about it that much, cause it's only a detention and then you will probably will do it. If the sanctions are really harsh like if you beat someone up then you will probably get permanently excluded, that will stop a lot of people from doing it."

Yes

"Yeah, it's actually kind of strict that we are not allowed to fight and if you fight you will probably get in deep trouble because teachers are always mentioning it, that fighting is not allowed."

"Yeah, it helps them to have that fear inside them when they get excluded."

Not sure

"I don't know about that. I think they do, every school does have that. I think they do."

Some pupils made suggestions about what to include in the policies, such as:

"You can do stuff for them to be together, probably like art or something, or working together."

"Try and do activities with the pupils that are fighting, so instead of being enemies they can become friends."

There were mixed responses from pupils in E1 on whether their school had any policies to deal with conflict. While some pupils were aware of some of the policies, the majority were not sure. Moreover, some pupils felt that the policies should include activities that focus on friendship building and bringing pupils together. One activity suggested was art.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	Edward Elgar
Yes	Count	57
	%	65.5%
No	Count	6
	%	6.9%
Not sure	Count	24
	%	27.6%
Total	Count	87
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 4

When asked if their school had an anti-bullying policy, majority of pupils said *yes*, a significant number of pupils were *not sure* and six pupils said *no*.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	Edward Elgar
Yes	Count	23
	%	28.0%
No	Count	58
	%	70.7%
Not sure	Count	1
	%	1.2%
Total	Count	82
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 9

When asked if pupils felt they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, a significant 70.0% did not feel that they had a say. Only 28.0% of pupils were aware of the anti-bullying policies in their school. Only one pupil said that they felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

No

"It's not really a say but then you know what to do to stay out of it … in the policy itself I don't think you really have a say on what's right and what's wrong."

"No."

"No."

Not sure

"Not sure."

Not directly answering the question

"We have pupil councils … I think it's a group of pupils that meet … they help out with what to do when these stuff happens."

The pupil interview responses to whether they feel they have a say in the anti-bullying policies confirms their questionnaire responses in that majority of pupils also said *no* to having a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

4.3.4 Summary of pupil findings in Edward Elgar School (E1)

Perceptions of conflict

There was a strong level of agreement between pupil questionnaires and interview responses in E1. In terms of perceptions of conflict, most pupils viewed conflict to be physical. More specifically, the majority of pupils in E1 defined conflict as fighting. Most pupils also perceived fighting as the most common and most serious pupil conflicts in their school. When asked if they had ever self-harmed, a small percentage did admit to having self-harmed, suggesting that some pupils in E1 do self-harm. In terms of location of pupil conflicts, the majority of pupils perceived most pupil conflicts to occur in the playground. Finally, when asked if pupils felt that pupils and teachers shared the same views of pupil conflicts, most pupils agreed.

Responses to conflict

In terms of responses to conflict, most pupils in E1 believed that conflicts could be resolved by talking to someone or telling someone about them. Pupils in E1 perceived that other pupils in their school settle their conflicts by fighting. Pupils said that when they fall out with someone, and when someone falls out with them, they usually respond by avoiding them. Furthermore, when asked how they responded to most of the conflicts that they experienced most pupils said, by avoiding them. Most pupils believed that teachers were responsible for managing pupil conflict in their school. Pupils were also asked if they felt that the adults in their school were doing enough to reduce or manage pupil conflicts. There seemed to be mixed feelings in that the majority said *no* in their questionnaire responses, yet the majority said *yes* in their interview responses. Finally, when asked who pupils would talk to if they had a problem at school, the majority said to their friends.

Policies

Pupils were also asked questions that examined their awareness of, and involvement with, school policies. When asked if their school had any policies that dealt with conflict the majority of pupils did not know, but one pupil mentioned an anti-bullying policy, another pupil mentioned internal exclusions. When asked if pupils felt that these policies were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts, most of them said yes. The majority of pupils in E1showed awareness of the anti-bullying policy in their school but did not feel that they had a say in it.

4.4 Pupil findings in Charles Dickens School (E2)

There were a total of 107 completed pupil questionnaires in E2. Of the 107 pupils, 8 were interviewed (based on availability). However, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses because some pupils either did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, and/or because the interviews were semi-structured and not all pupils were asked exactly the same questions and therefore some questions will have responses from less than eight pupils. However, some answers may consist of more than eight response categories as some pupils gave more than one response to a question.

4.4.1 Pupil perceptions of conflict in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fight	53.2%
Argument	42.1%
Disagreement	28.0%
Falling out	7.5%
Name-calling	6.5%

In E2, pupils' definitions of conflict varied from fighting to name-calling. The majority of pupils in E2, however, defined conflict as *fighting*: this was followed by *arguing* and *disagreeing*, *falling out* and *name-calling*. Other responses (<5.0%) included; bullying, falling out, tension, disliking, war, racism, a discussion, physically hurting another person, verbal confrontation, and being picked on.

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Interview responses

Fighting and arguing

"War and fighting and things like that … Punching or arguments also, things like that."

"When two people get into an argument and maybe aggression towards each other."

"Like fighting and arguing."

"Sometimes people fight or arguing really."

"Maybe when somebody is screaming at you about something, like an argument or something like fighting … like when you're punching and stuff."

The pupil questionnaire and interview responses were consistent in E2, in that the majority of pupils in E2 defined conflict as fighting.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	32.7%
Name-calling	14.0%
Arguments	14.0%
Bullying	10.2%
Cussing	8.4%
Verbal confrontations/abuse	5.6%

Along with defining conflict as fighting, the majority of pupils in E2 also perceived *fighting* to be the most common pupil conflict in their school. Other common conflicts that were mentioned were: name-calling, arguments, bullying, cussing, and verbal confrontations. Fighting was the one conflict that was mentioned the most often. Other responses (<5.0%) included; back chatting teachers, falling out, rumours, bitching, being two faced, dissing, football gossip, boredom and pupils leaving the year base.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Interviews responses

Physical fighting or arguing

"Probably actually fighting … sometimes punching, kicking people, like that…physical fighting."

"Sometimes a lot of fights break out and a lot of people will try to misbehave and it will lead to conflict that fighting and arguments."

"Sometimes people do argue at me and other people."

"Arguing, sometimes fighting … like it could be play fighting and then it gets serious or with girls obviously bitchiness."

The pupil was asked to elaborate on what she meant by "bitchiness." She noted:

"Like when girls are jealous about other girls and then they talk about them girls that they are jealous of to their friends and it gets around and then the person they are talking about confronts them and then it ends up in a horrible state."

Another female pupil also mentioned "bitchiness" as a common pupil conflict. She said:

"Girls bitching, when girls go behind each other's backs and say something that go back to them and then then they will come up to their face and start confronting them about things. That's the most common. It's usually girls that get into a lot of conflict."

The pupil interview responses were consistent with their questionnaire responses in that the majority of pupils perceived fighting to be the most common pupil conflict in their school, although other common conflicts such as arguing and gossiping (bitchiness) were also mentioned, mainly by female pupils.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	41.1%
Bullying	21.4%
Racism	9.3%

Most pupils in E2 identified *fighting* as the most serious pupil conflict in their school, followed by bullying and racism. Fighting was mentioned twice as much as bullying and was the most frequently reported response. Racism was also mentioned.

Other responses (<5.0%) included: arguing, mocking, physical abuse, jealousy, throwing stuff, homophobic language, assault, cussing, and name-calling. One pupil said "when someone brings in an offensive weapon and someone gets really hurt".

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Getting picked on

"When it is serious, people keep picking on you, but when it is not serious, it's a joke really."

"I can tell when they are serious because when they say it they don't say they are joking, they just look at you and say I don't like you."

Bullying

"Bullying."

Fighting

"Fighting."

"Taking the mickey out of someone, fighting, if someone is sitting in a class and someone slaps them, what people wear."

"A punch-up when everyone starts throwing fists at each other and then someone gets hurt at the end of it, like proper injured."

The pupil interview responses about the most serious pupil conflict in their school supported their interview responses in that overall, most pupils mentioned fighting, followed by bullying, and making fun of others.

Question: Have you ever self-harmed?

Questionnaire responses

		Charles Dickens
Yes	Count	11
	%	10.5%
No	Count	83
	%	79.0%
Not sure	Count	11
	%	10.5%
Total	Count	105
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 2

Although majority of pupils in E2 said that they had not self-harmed, 11 pupils (10.5%) said that they were not sure and another 11 (10.5%) said that they had. The fact that some pupils admitted to self-harming suggests that self-harm is a pupil problem that exists in E2. Moreover, the fact that some pupils were not sure as to whether or not they had self-harmed is a concern, as it means that they either do not know what self-harm means or that they are self-harming but do not know that they are because they do not know what self-harm means.

Question: Why did you self-harm?

Questionnaire responses

Stress/coping

"I'm an individual that is very mature. My parents treat me like an adult when they should treat me like a teenager. They secure themselves because they know that I am very responsible and have the knowledge of a 38 year old. So I cut my hands with a razor so that they can get the point that I'm still a kid and they should treat me like one and that I can do the crazy things that other teens do as well" (15 year old, female pupil).

Similarly, other pupils contended:

"Because life at home was too hard" (14 year old female pupil).

"Relieves stress" (14 year old female pupil).

"I was depressed" (14 year old pupil).

"Family problems/issues" (13 year old female pupil).

Anger

A second response category found was 'anger'. One 12 year old female pupil said:

"I bashed my head on a wall because I was angry."

Bullying

A third response category was 'bullying'. One 15 year old female pupil said that the reason why she self-harmed was:

"For being bullied."

One female pupil (year 10) did not give a reason as to why she self-harmed, instead she explained how she self-harmed:

"I cut my legs."

Based on the pupil responses above, it appears that pupils in E2 had a sound knowledge of the concept of self-harm. Coping, stress and relief were some pupil responses given for self-harming. However, one pupil response indicated that the pupil may have had a misconception of the term 'self-harm.' He contended:

"I slep [slipped] on a wet floor went I was runnins [running]" (13 year old male pupil).

Personal reasons

Some pupils did not give reasons why they self-harmed, they said:

"I would prefer to not talk about it" (11 year old male pupil).

"It's personal" (13 year old female pupil).

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

In order to better understand why the pupils self-harmed, it was important to examine whether they knew what the term meant, which is why I asked them to define self-harm. Their responses indicated that they had a sound knowledge of the concept. Below are some of the responses given:

"Probably like trying to hurt yourself, in ways to take away the pain … like focus the pain in one part … probably with a knife."

"When you are harming yourself or maybe damaging part of your body, like maybe cutting your hand or just harming yourself."

"Yeah but only if somebody tells them to and they just do … like just for a guy to take the mickey he tells a boy to slap himself or something, and then the boy does it."

From the pupil definitions above, it appeared that the pupils had a sound knowledge of self-harm. This question was an important question to ask as it would clarify why pupils were saying that they self-harmed. Moreover, if they did not know what it meant to self-harm but were saying that they had self-harmed then the data would be skewed because the pupils would not be sure what they were responding to. However, that was not the case here.

Question: Do you think that the pupils and teachers at your school share the same views of pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Sometimes

"Sometimes."

No

"If something is going on, they wouldn't really take that into account, they would just be like 'oh it's nothing, just don't do it again', if it was big then okay but if it's little then they don't really help."

"Not really because if two people did get into a really bad conflict it would be one girl's fault cause she started it, but the other girl took action by either just walking away or the other girl might have hit her so she hit her back. They'll take the sides of the girl that's doing the picking. That's happened on quite a few occasions. Sometimes they don't listen to both sides."

"No, because they have their own ideas of what is going on."

Yes

"I think so, yeah. I think everyone has the same opinion on conflict in this school. Certain teachers will understand but then certain teachers would ignore it but you can't just ignore someone whose been bullied for ages that's just stupid."

These pupils were further asked for ways that they would like to see the adults in their school better manage pupil conflicts, below are some of the responses given:

"Treat both opinions the same. So they should both get equal punishments, instead of one gets worse and one gets less."

"Take the people who are bullying and the people who they are bullying into a room and talk to them instead of just saying, 'right you are excluded, you are on report'. Because you don't really know what's gone on, if you say a teacher come past and I said something to a girl, they would blame it all on me but they didn't know what she said to me, so she would get away with it kind of thing and then I would get in trouble for it."

Although some pupils felt that they and teachers shared the same notions of pupil's conflicts, most pupils did not feel that teachers and pupils shared the same ideas of pupil conflicts.

Question: Where do most pupil conflicts happen?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
The concourse/front fields	28.0%
Outside	12.1%
The mound	12.1%
The Panini Hut	7.5%

The *concourse/front fields* were mentioned the most by pupils as the place where most pupil conflicts took place. This was followed by *outside*, on the *mound* and by the *Panini Hut* (a shack that the pupils were responsible for, where they sold paninis and drinks during lunch and recess). Other responses (<5.0%) included: the hall, the year base, over the internet, in the toilets, during lessons and everywhere.

Question: Where do most pupil conflicts happen?

Interview responses

Front fields

"Sometimes at the front fields…where the car park is... or places where teachers aren't really."

"In the fields sometimes."

"In the concourse, just at the front…it's near the front gates, when you just come in from the parking."

The playground/the concourse

"Most of the physical fighting is in the playground and outside on the concourse, within the school gates."

Everywhere

"It's all around basically, the usual is that someone gets racist or something, they'll start a fight."

"It's anywhere. But if there is going to be a fight, then it's usually outside of school…like a really big row that will end up into being physical, then it would most probably be outside of school, because obviously no teachers can get involved."

The interview responses on the location of most pupil conflicts reflected the questionnaire responses but also included the playground and everywhere and anywhere.

4.4.2 Pupil responses to conflict in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: Most conflicts can be resolved by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Talking/telling someone	42.9%
Apologizing	11.2%
Staff involvement	11.2% * (out of which one pupil said "having teachers in the playground more often."
Avoidance	6.5%

Pupils in E2 gave different responses to how most conflicts could be resolved. The majority of pupils said that most conflicts could be resolved by *talking or telling someone*. Other pupils felt that most pupil conflicts could be resolved by *apologizing*, *involving staff* and/or by *avoiding* them. Other responses (with <5.0%) included; hugging, shaking hands, high fives, being civil, making them [pupils] have fun with each other, counselling, arguing, putting one's differences aside, name-calling/cussing, and other friends stopping it.

Question: Pupils settle their conflicts at my school by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Frequency
Fighting	35.5%
Talking	33.6%
Arguing	7.4%
Avoiding	7.4%

Almost the same number of pupils mentioned *fighting* and *talking* as ways that pupils settle their conflicts in their school, with slightly a few more pupils mentioning fighting. A small number of pupils also mentioned arguing and avoiding. Other responses (<5.0%) included; getting help, apologizing, making up, bullying, cussing, sorting it out themselves [pupils], swearing and back stabbing, cussing, name-calling, teachers, being civil, hugging, high fives and respect and shaking hands.

Question: When I fall out with someone, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Avoid them	50.4%
Make up/solve the problem	28.9%
Fight	5.6%

The results from the table above indicate that more than half of the pupils in E2 *avoid* people that they fall out with. A significant number of pupils (28.9%) also mentioned *making up/solving the problem*, with *fighting* being the third most frequently-chosen solution. Other responses (with <5.0%) included; talking back, argue, gossip, let rage and depression sink in, try to calm down and love it.

Question: When someone falls out with me, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Avoid them	43.9%
Make up/solve the problem	32.7%

The results from the pupil questionnaires indicate that the majority of pupils in E2 *avoid* people who fall out with them. This was followed by a large number of pupils (32.7%) who said that they would try to *make up* with the person/people who fell out with them. Other responses (<5.0%) included; arguing, trying to change, fighting, letting rage and depression sink in, love it, keep it on my mind cause I've lost a friend, get over it, defend myself, and think why.

Question: How do you respond to the conflicts that you experience at school?

Interview responses

Avoid them

"Um, when people begin about me or I get into a fight, I just sort of block it out I just don't really care."

"I ignore it. Let whoever got a say, say what they gotta say and then just get on with it… you just forget it. Say what you gotta say and then just walk away."

"I try to walk away and tell a teacher or something."

Fight

"Because I am from an Asian background, a lot of people take the mickey out of me and are like racist and I don't like racist people, they make me angry and I will fight back like physically."

"I would just hit them."

When asked how pupils responded to the conflicts that they experienced at school, there was a mixture of fight and flight (avoidance) responses, with slightly more pupils mentioning avoidance.

Question: It is…….'s responsibility to manage pupil conflicts at my school

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Teachers'	42.9%
Those involved	27.1%
The school's	8.4%
Everyone's	6.5%
Head teacher's	6.5%

The majority of pupils in E2 felt that it was the *teachers'* responsibility to manage pupil conflicts. This was followed by a response rate of 27.1% of pupils who felt that it was the responsibility of *those involved* in the conflicts to solve them. Other

responses included: Everyone, the school, including head teachers. Other responses (<5.0%) included; staff, lunch ladies, family, older pupils and friends.

Question: Do you think the adults at your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses

Country			Charles Dickens
England	**Yes**	Count	18
		% within school	17.1%
	No	Count	43
		% within school	41.0%
	Not sure	Count	44
		% within school	41.9%
	Total	Count	105
		% within school	100.0%

Missing, N = 2

When asked if pupils thought that the adults in their school were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts, most pupils said *no* and *not sure* in their interview responses. Only 17.1% of pupils said that they thought that the adults in their school were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts.

Question: Do you think the adults at your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

No

"No."

"No not really."

"I think that they could be doing a lot more, but sometimes they just don't want to be bothered."

Sort of

"Kind of."

"In a way they kind of are, cause like most things it doesn't actually get out that people are being horrible and bullying, it's like little things that they don't hear about. If it was a big thing then yeah they would probably take it seriously."

"I think they do enough, but by the time the find the pupils that are bullying then they've already done their bullying and it's too late. But they do, do enough like if you get caught you do get you get report, red ticket and stuff."

The pupils were asked what they personally thought teachers could do better to prevent or stop pupil conflicts. Below is a suggestion from one of the pupils:

"Find out exactly what's happening cause they just tell you briefly, and you don't want to be taking sides when you don't know exactly what's happening and then deal with it."

The pupil responses above indicate that a lot of pupils in E2 did not feel that teachers did enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts in their school. When asked what they thought teachers could do better to prevent or stop pupil conflicts one suggestion made was for teachers to take their time to find out exactly what is happening, as opposed to finding a quick solution.

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Friends	51.4%
Family	34.6%
Teachers	21.5%
No one	10.3%
Tutor	7.5%

Most pupils in E2 said that they would talk to their *friends* if they had a problem at school. A large proportion of pupils also mentioned that they would talk to their *family*. Some pupils said that they would talk to their *teachers*, while others said *no one*, and a few pupils mentioned their *tutors*. Other responses (<5%) included: LSA, Deputy Head Teacher, Head Teacher, Staff.

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Interview responses

Friends

"My mates really."

"My friends."

"I would normally to my mates."

Tutor

"My tutor, because he understands."

Teacher/avoidance

"I try to walk away and tell a teacher or something."

No one

"I wouldn't talk to no one about it … if someone was talking about me or just anything then I would just hit them."

"No one because in our sight it would be a sign of grassing on the other person and then you'll get into more trouble and then you'll be more hassled with that person you've got a problem with. I'd rather sort it out with the person … either try and talk about it, try and get the problem over and done with … and not get teachers involved cause it'll just make the situation worse in a way."

The pupil interview responses confirm their questionnaire responses in that pupils predominantly mentioned that they would talk to their friends if they had a problem at school.

4.4.3 Pupil awareness of school policies in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yeah they have like beat bullying stuff. We have like Blue days, you dress in all Blue that's to do with beat bullying we have like these bands to beat bullying cause there is a lot of bullying in this school as there are in normal schools but we do something about

it we do beat bullying and then people talk on camera and they show it in assemblies and that."

"We have a big beat bullying campaign, and that's good we all got these Blue wristbands…they are strict on things like that, like you will get really punished, like excluded, chucked out of school or internally excluded, there is a lot of things you can do about it. They deal with it quite well actually."

"Yes, we have a behavioural policy that tells you how you should behave. We also have an anti-bullying policy."

"Yes. I can't remember all of them, but if you get into a fight, if it gets serious you get excluded."

Not sure

"No, I don't know."

"I'm not really sure about that."

Most pupils in E2 showed awareness of some sort of policy in their school; a lot of them mentioned that their school had an anti-bullying policy and a beat bullying campaign. Having said that, some pupils also mentioned that they were not sure as to whether their school had any policies that dealt with conflict.

Question: Do you think these polices are helpful in reducing or stopping pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yeah."

"Yeah cause we all come in wearing Blue, blue hair, blue face paint."

"We are like an anti-bullying school so they do a lot of campaigns and do anti-bullying week that is like you dress up in Blue and you can do your hair and there are competitions to see who are the most Blue. And they do take bullying seriously mostly. There are some that does slip away, that the teachers don't care about."

It appears from the responses above that pupils in E2 did find the school policies helpful in managing or stopping pupil conflicts in their school.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Country	[redacted]	Charles Dickens
Yes	Count	92
	%	92.9%
No	Count	1
	%	1.0%
Not sure	Count	6
	%	6.1%
Total	Count	99
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 8

The great majority of pupils in E2 said that there was an anti-bullying policy in their school. This suggests that most pupils in E2 were aware of the anti-bullying policies in their school.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	Charles Dickens
Yes	Count	50
	%	48.1%
No	Count	52
	%	50.0%
Not sure	Count	2
	%	1.9%
Total	Count	104
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 3

There was a mixed response in pupil responses to the question “Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?”. Fifty-two pupils did not feel that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, while 50 pupils said they did have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school. A small number of

pupils (two) said that they were not sure. This indicates that about half of pupils in E2 feel that they have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, while the other half do not.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

No

"No."

"No."

Yes

"I think so, yes."

"Yes, I feel that I do."

"Yes."

Not sure

"I'm not sure."

The pupil interview responses to whether they felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school coincided with their questionnaire responses in that an almost even number pupils said both *yes* and *no*, and only a small proportion of pupils were not sure.

4.4.4 Summary of pupil findings in Charles Dickens School (E2)

Perceptions of conflict

Overall, pupils in E2 viewed conflict to be physical. For instance, conflict was mainly defined as fighting. Fighting was also perceived to be the most common and most serious pupil conflict by most pupils in E2. Although the majority of pupils in E2 said that they had not self-harmed, some did admit to having done it. Moreover, the majority of pupils in E2 did not feel that teachers and pupils shared the same views of pupil conflicts. In terms of pupil perceptions of locations of pupil conflicts, there was a

general consensus amongst pupils that most pupil conflicts happened in the front fields, also referred to as the concourse.

Responses to conflict

The majority of pupils in E2 believed that most conflicts could be resolved by talking about them or telling someone. They perceived that other pupils in their school settled their conflicts by fighting. Pupils were asked what they usually do when they fall out with someone and when someone falls out with them; in both cases most pupils said that they would avoid them. This was confirmed when they were asked how they responded to most of the conflicts that they experienced, where most pupils also said avoidance. In terms of responsibility for management of pupil conflicts, most pupils felt that teachers were responsible. When asked if they felt that the adults at their schools were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts, most pupils either did not think so or were not sure. Finally, most pupils said that they would talk to their friends if they had a problem at school.

Policies

The majority of pupils in E2 showed some awareness of school policies dealing with conflict. The two policies that were mentioned were a behavioural policy and an anti-bullying policy. Moreover, the majority of pupils felt that these policies were helpful in reducing or stopping pupil conflicts. Finally, when specifically asked if their school had an anti-bullying policy, the majority of pupils said *yes*. However, when asked if pupils felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policy at their school, there were mixed reviews, almost half said *yes*, and half did not feel that they had a say.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented data collected from teacher and pupils in the two schools in England (E1 & E2). The data was centred on teacher and pupil perceptions of, responses to conflict, and awareness of school policies that dealt with conflict. Overall, the results showed differences between pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict in England. Apart from the perceptual differences between pupil and teacher notions of conflict, there were no other significant differences between pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict in E1 and E2.

Chapter 5

Findings from Schools in Denmark

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings on teacher and pupil perceptions of, and responses to conflict from two schools in Denmark. It will start by illustrating teacher questionnaire and interview responses, which will then be followed by pupil questionnaire and interview responses.

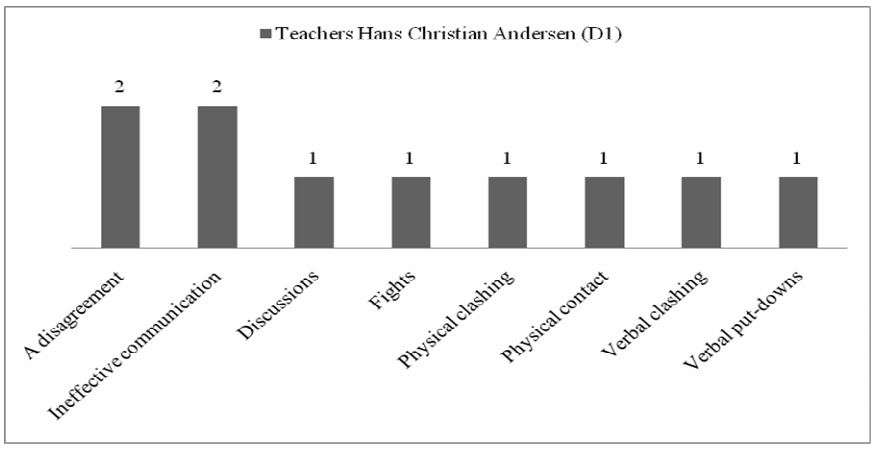
5.1 Teacher findings in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

There were a total of six completed teacher questionnaires in D1, and all six teachers were interviewed. However, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses because some teachers either did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, and/or because the interviews were semi-structured and not all teachers were asked exactly the same questions; therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than six teachers. However, some answers may consist of more than six response categories, as some teachers gave more than one response to a question.

5.1.1 Teacher perceptions of conflict in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in D1 defined conflict as verbal. The most frequent definitions were *disagreements* and *ineffective communication*. However, other definitions included discussions, verbal put-downs and clashes. However, some teachers also defined conflict as being physical, such as fights and physical contact.

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

Interview responses

A disagreement

"When people have different opinions and cannot come to a mutual agreement."

"Disagreements between pupils."

"Conflict is a disagreement between two or more people, it's more a discussion and it arises generally when there is a disagreement between the two people."

"A disagreement."

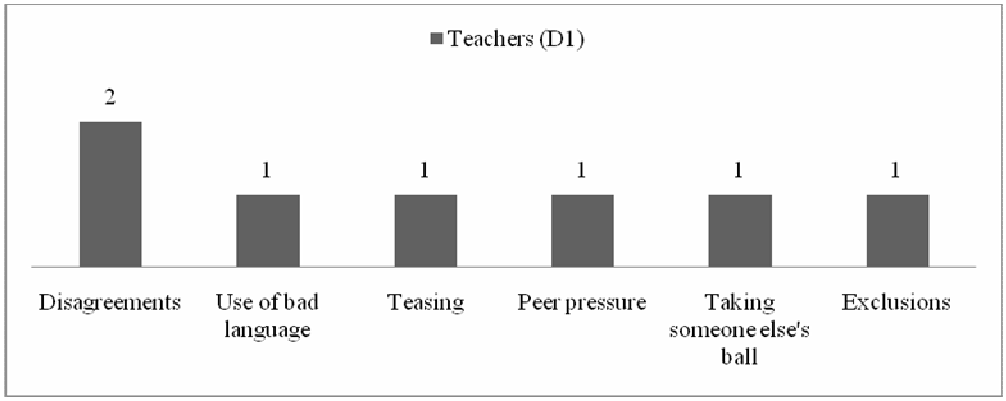
An argument

"An argument between two people or more than two people it could be a group…also it could be not talking to each other, that tension between people."

The teacher interview responses were consistent with their questionnaire responses in that most teachers viewed conflict as being verbal, with majority of them defining it as a disagreement.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in D1 perceived *disagreements* to be the most common pupil conflicts in their school. Some teachers also perceived the use of bad language, teasing, peer pressure, taking someone else's ball and exclusion to be amongst the most common pupil conflicts in their school.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Personality clashes

"Normally personality clashes, like you have two hard-headed people in a class and they just don't get along, just so stubborn. Or normally, you have people that are just being bullied generally and their way of dealing with it is by putting up a shield and just trying to be hard-headed."

Disrespect

"Disrespecting each other, I think sometimes its intentional…name-calling or looking to have a fight or an argument, it tends to have history so it tends to carry on.

Getting picked on

"Just being picked on really for different things."

Fighting

"Fights, physical fights, arguing, they always argue, nick-names … sometimes over things and nick-names like "don't call me fat," that happens a lot."

Disagreements

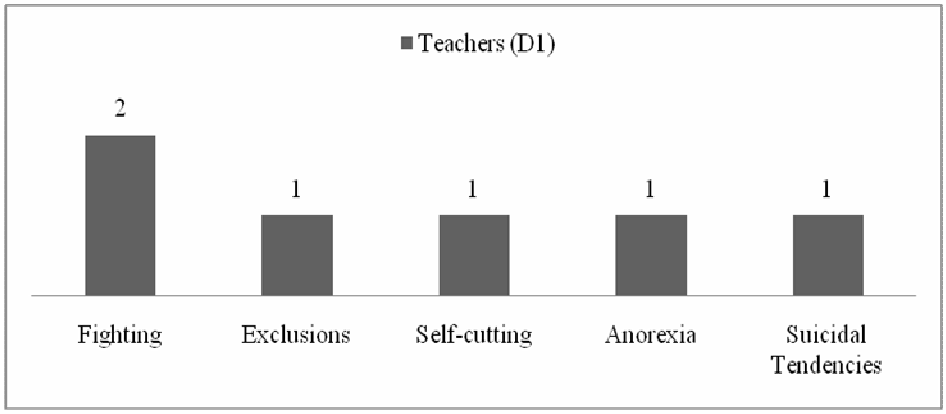
"Disagreements."

"When pupils have a go at each other over something as small as someone taking someone else's eraser."

The interview responses above showed the variety of teachers' perceptions of the most common pupil conflicts in their school. Disagreements and bullying were included in the types of conflicts as well as personality clashes, being picked on, name-calling and fighting.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Amongst the most serious pupil conflicts in their school, teacher perceptions included *fighting* and *self-harm,* which incorporated self-cutting, anorexia and suicidal tendencies.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Interview responses

Emotional upset

"When children don't think it's fun to come to school or when they go home crying every day."

"You can tell by looking at the pupil's face. If they are really upset or crying then you know it's not a joke, if however both pupils are laughing or not bothered by it then I know it's not to be taken seriously."

"When there is someone that is sad, or has been hurt or feels uncomfortable about what is being said or done against them."

Violence

"I don't know, I think where there is violence."

Fighting

"Physical fighting is the most serious pupil conflict that we have in this school."

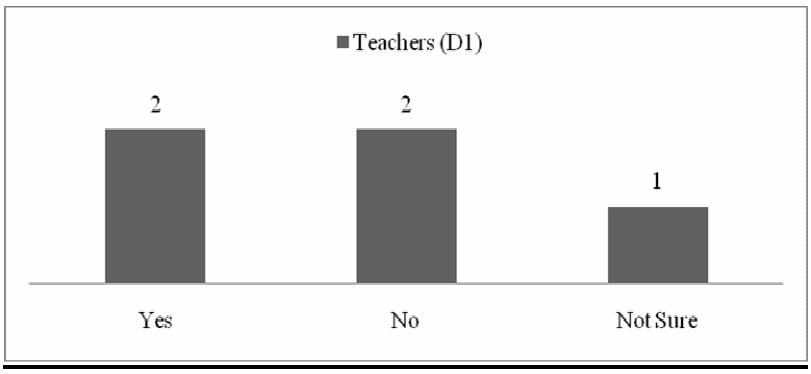
Self-harm

"When pupils try to hurt themselves because they cannot cope with everyday life."

The teacher interview responses to the most serious pupil conflict in their school consisted of responses such as fighting, and when people self-harm. Some teachers perceived a conflict to be serious when a child is emotionally upset.

Question: Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Questionnaire response



For teacher perceptions of pupil self-harm, the results show that an equal number of teachers said *yes* to self-harm being a pupil conflict as did to *no*. One teacher reported that they were *not sure*.

Question: Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"I know one pupil who self-harms, however, the issue is being dealt with."

No

"No."

"I have never known or heard of any pupils to self-harm."

"No, not that I am aware of."

"I don't believe so."

Although most teachers in D1 said that self-harm was not a pupil problem in their school, however, a few teachers did say that self-harm was a pupil problem in their school.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same views of pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes."

"Yes, I think that they are pretty aligned."

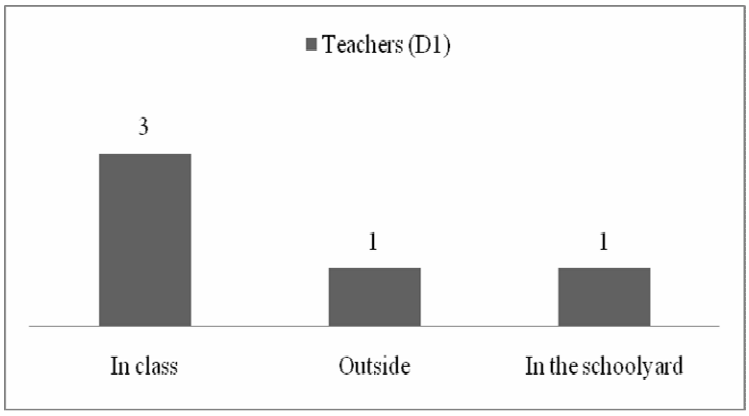
"Yes, but I think that there are times where teachers do misunderstand and make hasty decisions. But on the whole, I think that teachers and pupils do share the same notions, yes."

"Not always, but most of the time."

All the teacher responses above indicate that teachers in D1 believe that teachers and pupils share the same ideas of pupil conflict.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Questionnaire responses



The majority of teachers in D1 perceived that pupil conflicts took place *in class*, however, one teacher perceived them to happen in the *schoolyard* and another said *outside*. The last response is ambiguous, as 'outside' can suggest either outside a lesson

or outside school; if it refers to outside lessons, a number of different places could be indicated.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Interview responses

In class

"Mostly in the class."

"In the class, during lesson, they interrupt the lessons. Otherwise during recess there are also some conflicts, and again it is the younger grades mostly, although there is a guard that walks around."

In the playground

"In the playground where there are no teachers/adults present."

"Outside in the playground."

Mixed responses

"During recess, outside, or in the class, during break."

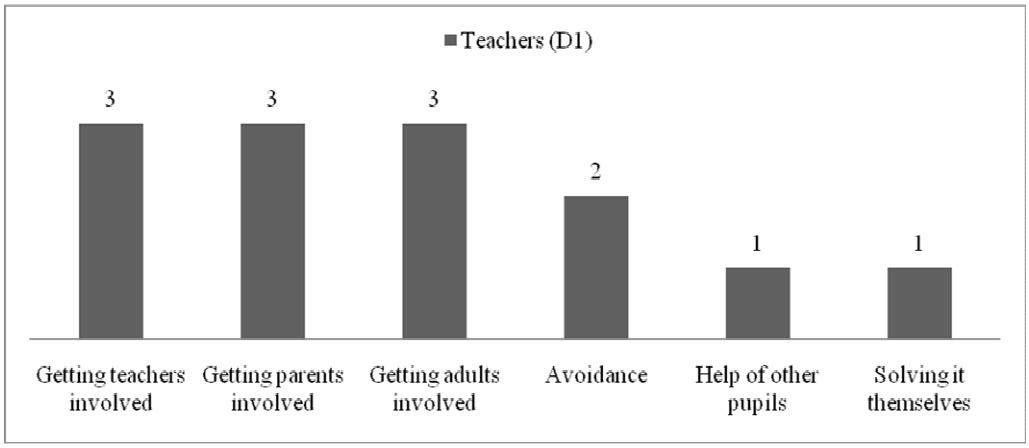
"In the class, but outside lessons."

The responses given by teacher in interviews reflect their questionnaire responses on where conflicts happen. There is a mixture of responses such as the playground, in the class and outside, indicating that pupil conflicts are not confined to one area.

5.1.2 Teacher responses to conflict in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Teachers perceived that pupils resolved their conflicts mainly by *getting teachers, parents and adults involved*. Other teacher responses included: avoiding the conflict/s, getting help from other pupils and that the pupils solved the conflicts themselves.

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Talking

"They usually try to sort it out either by talking to teachers or their peers."

"Some talk to their teachers, some turn to the mediators and some get their parents involved."

"They talk to their friends about them. Sometimes they also ask teachers for help, but they mostly talk to their friends."

"They turn to their class teachers."

It depends on…

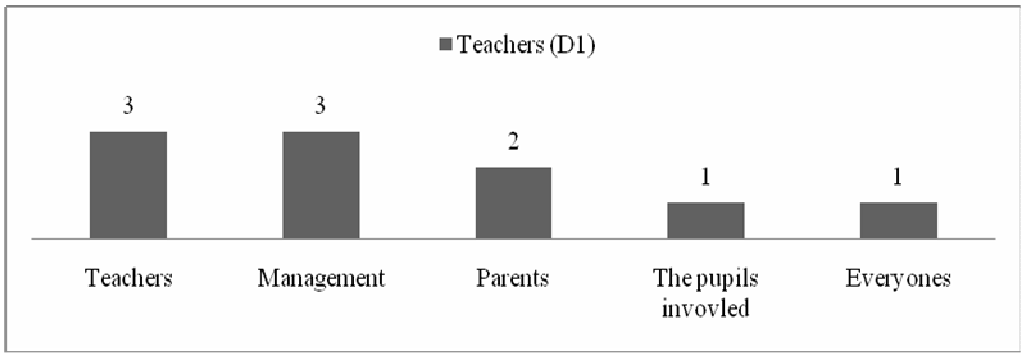
"I think that varies depending on how effectively it's dealt with. I think that if it is dealt with effectively and there are sanctions in place then the students respond positively, and I mean not only those who are involved with it but also those who witness it."

"In several ways; there are people in the lesson or outside the lesson who are considered bad, disruptive, but I have noticed when there is a conflict they come forward and sort it out, the children. Most disruptive pupils, when there is a conflict, they come forward to sort it out … they sort it out themselves, they take the initiative."

The teacher interview responses to how they think pupils resolve or manage their conflicts reflects their questionnaire response, in that in both cases teachers mentioned that pupils resolve and manage their conflicts in school by talking to their teachers, mediators and peers. Some teachers said that pupils manage their conflicts themselves.

Question: Whose responsibility do you think it is to reduce/manage pupil conflicts in your school?

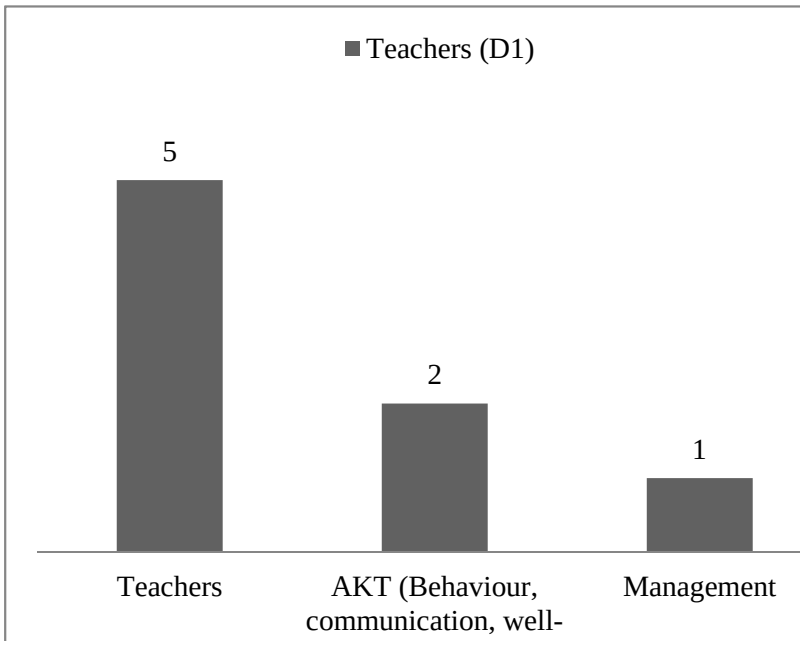
Questionnaire responses



When asked whose responsibility they thought it was to reduce/manage pupil conflicts at their schools, *teachers* and the *school management* were mentioned the most by teachers in D1. Parents were also mentioned. Other responses included: those pupils involved and everyone.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Questionnaire



The responses above show that most teachers in D1 perceived pupils to turn to *teachers* if they had a problem at school. However, some teachers also said that pupils would to turn to their *AKT*–Adfærd, Kommunikation og Trivsel (Behaviour, Communication and Well-being) teachers and the *school management*, if they were faced with a problem at school.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Interview responses

Teachers

"A lot of them turn to the teachers, after the teacher, a lot of pupils confront the other person and then together they take it to the teacher, where the teachers act as mediators. Some will solve them themselves."

"Usually they turn to the teacher, sometimes they also turn to each other, but generally it's the teacher."

"When its physical conflict then they turn to the teacher, but if its nick-names then they don't care but as soon as they injure themselves then they go to the teachers."

"The class teacher."

Mediators

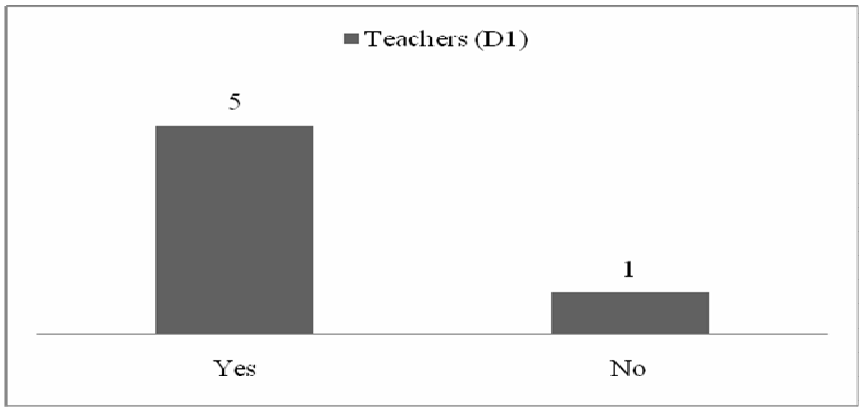
"Teachers and conflict mediators."

"Pupil mediators."

The teacher interview responses in D1were consistent with their questionnaire responses, in that, the majority of teachers said that pupils would turn to *teachers* if they had a problem at school. Some teachers, however, also mentioned conflict mediators and AKT teachers; is interesting that no teachers in D1 mentioned friends as people that pupils would turn if they had a problem at school.

Question: Do you think the staff in your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses



From the graph above we can see that five out of six teachers in D1 believed that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts. Only one teacher did not feel that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce/stop pupil conflicts.

Question: Do you think the staff in your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"In my personal experience, yes."

"Yes, partly because it is part of our job and partly because you cannot have a lesson unless a conflict has been resolved."

"Definitely."

"Yes and no. In most instances I believe that staff are doing everything that they can, but there are of course exceptions."

"Yes, but we can always do more I guess."

No

"*No, I always think that we can and should do more."*

These interview responses were consistent with the questionnaire items above, indicating that most teachers in D1 did that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts in their school.

5.1.3 Teacher awareness of school policies in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes, we have an anti-bullying policy."

"Yes, we do, we have an anti-bullying policy and there are also class meetings where we discuss conflicts and consequences."

"We have an anti-bullying scheme at the school not because there is a lot of bullying but because we want to prevent it."

"Yes, we have many, but the main one to deal with conflict is our anti-bullying policy."

"We have something called 'kort og godt' [which translates as 'card and good'] and something called 'Klassemodet' [translated as 'The Class Meeting'] and these are used outside of the lessons."

Not sure

"I'm not really sure."

From the teacher responses above, it appears that teachers in D1 are aware of some of the policies at their school, as a few different policies were mentioned.

Question: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"I think they help a lot! I feel that the school is very good at managing pupil conflicts, but I think more could be done to deal with the way that they [pupils] speak and the bad language that they use."

"I do think they are, not because there is a lot of conflicts, or directly a lot of bullying but because it prevents it in that the pupils are encouraged to think about conflict and bullying and have talked about things before they have developed and that makes the pupils aware of how they should deal with different situations so I most definitely feel that it is meaningful."

"Yes, I really do think that they are quite effective in reducing pupil conflicts."

"Yes they really are."

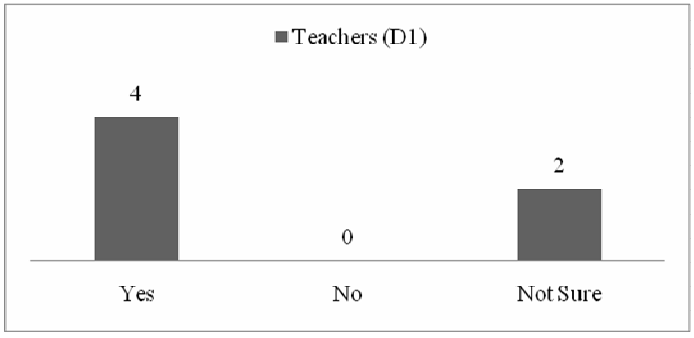
Not sure

"Not sure."

When asked whether teachers felt that the school policies were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts, majority of the teachers said *yes*.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

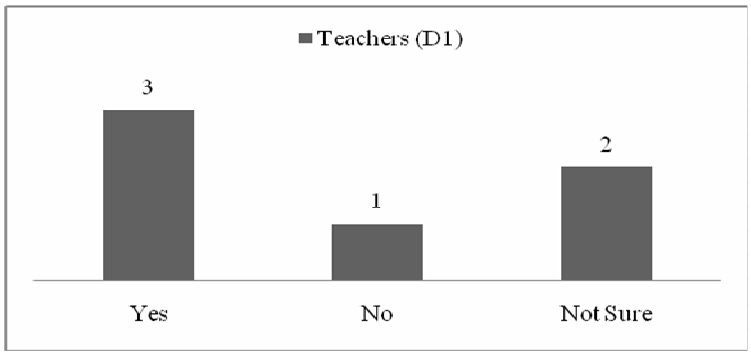
Questionnaire responses



Although the majority of teachers in D1 said that there was an anti-bullying policy in their school, a few were not sure, indicating that not all teachers are aware of such policies.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses



The results from the teacher questionnaires in response to whether pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school suggests a range of responses; *yes*, *no* and *not sure*. Although there was a range in teacher responses, the majority of teachers in D1 said that pupils *did* have a say in the anti-bullying policies at their school.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes, they are an integral part of the process."

"They are actively involved in identifying and solving conflicts during Klassens Time [The Class Hour], yes."

"I believe so."

"Yes."

No

"No they aren't involved in the actual making of the policy."

Not sure

"I'm not really sure, but I think that they are."

The majority of teachers that were interviewed said yes to pupils having a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school. These responses, together with the teacher questionnaire responses suggest that teachers overall feel that pupils do have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

5.1.4 Summary of teacher findings in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Perceptions

In terms of teacher definitions and perceptions of the most common pupil conflicts in their school, most teachers mentioned verbal conflicts. More specifically, the majority of teachers in D1 defined conflict as a disagreement. They also said that disagreements were the most common pupil conflicts in their school. Teachers in D1 perceived fighting to be the most serious pupil conflict in their school. When asked about self-harm, although majority of teachers said it was not a pupil problem in their school, some teachers in D1 did acknowledge it as an existing pupil problem. The majority of teachers in D1 believed that teachers and pupils shared the same views of pupil conflicts. In terms of location of pupil conflicts, the majority of teachers in D1 perceived most pupil conflicts to happen in class.

Responses

Teachers were asked about ways that pupils resolve and manage their conflicts in their school, to which the majority said by getting someone involved, whether that was parents, teachers or just an adult. When asked who they thought was responsible for managing pupil conflicts, most teachers said teachers and management. Teachers in D1 also believed that pupils would turn to teachers if they had a problem at school. When asked whether teachers felt that the staff at their school were doing enough to manage pupil conflicts the majority said *yes*.

Policies

In terms of teacher awareness of school policies, all teachers showed awareness of some type of policy. The policies mentioned were; anti-bullying, class meetings, and *Kort og Godt*. When further asked whether teachers believed that these policies were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts, there was a general consensus amongst teachers in D1 that they were. When asked specifically if their school had an anti-bullying policy

most teachers also said *yes*, and finally teachers in D1 did feel that pupils in their school had a say in the school's anti-bullying policies.

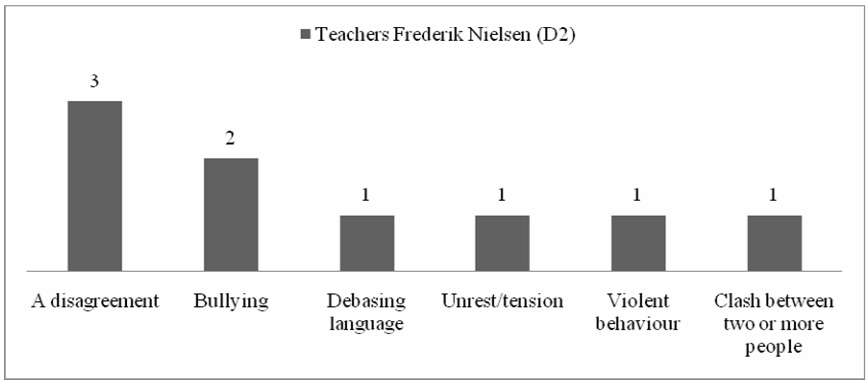
5.2 Teacher findings in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

There were a total of five completed teacher questionnaires in school D2. All five teachers were interviewed. However, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses because some teachers did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, some gave more than one response to a question and/or because the interviews were semi-structured and not all teachers were asked exactly the same questions, therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than six teachers. Some answers may consist of more than five response categories, as some teachers gave more than one response to a question.

5.2.1 Teacher perceptions of conflict in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

Questionnaire responses



The table above shows a variety of definitions of conflict, varying from disagreements to a clash between two or more people. However, conflict was defined mainly as a *disagreement* by teachers in D2, followed by *bullying*.

Question: In your opinion, what does "conflict" mean?

Interview responses

Arguing

"Unrest, trouble, arguing."

A disagreement

"A disagreement."

"When there is a disagreement."

"Anger, two persons who have different opinions, doesn't listen to each other and they want to convince each other to have the same idea but it's not possible because they have different opinions."

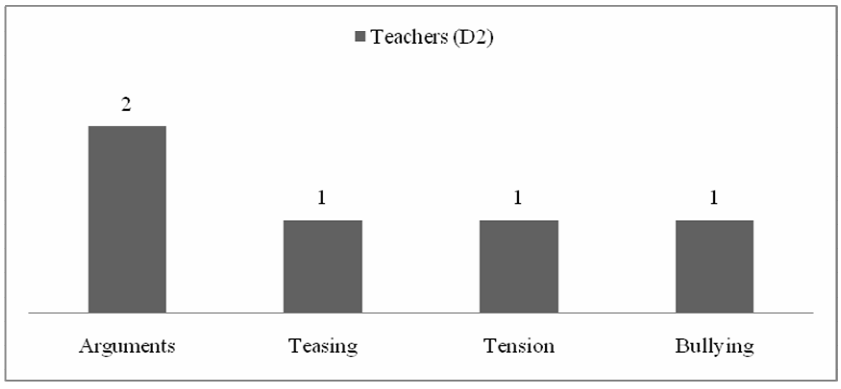
Harassment

"When one person continually harasses another person."

The teacher interview responses on their definitions of conflict corresponded to their questionnaire responses, in that they included definitions such as a disagreement, harassment and unrest, with most teachers defining conflict as a *disagreement*.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses



When asked about the most common type of pupil conflict in their school, most teachers in D2 mentioned *arguments* in their questionnaire responses. Other response categories included teasing, tension and bullying.

Question: What is the most common type of pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Bullying

"Bullying mainly."

"Bullying…I mean there isn't an extreme lot but for example if you are a boy and you are different, you have a different culture, a different religion, and doesn't look like the other kids or is a bit overweight so that which is not normal in their view will not directly be bullied but there will be comments like he is a "perker"[paki] or he lives there or he's got a weird religion. There will be small comments like that which can be perceived as bullying."

It varies

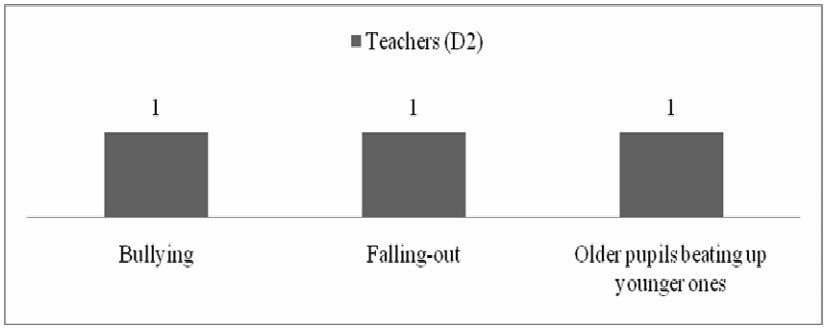
"Mostly in the younger grades, like behaviour conflicts due to lack of communication skills, speaking badly to one another, pushing one another, provoking one another, where one pushes someone a little bit and then that pupil pushes a bit harder and then conflict happens. In the older grades, there isn't that much conflict, more joking nick-name type behaviours."

"It tends to vary. The individual can engage in really physical conflicts, one of them punch ups over things like pencil cases and certainly in the younger ages it does seem to be very much centred about an insecurity about their space and basic sense of identity … these things are mine, they belong to me and then as they get older it tends to be again identity based but more to do with their values and their perspective, whether they be religious, political or otherwise, cultural … throwing stones or punching each other and getting into trouble."

There tended to be more variance in the teacher interview responses about the most common pupil conflicts; these consisted of responses such as bullying, racial remarks, lack of communication skills and physical conflict such as punching and kicking. Interestingly enough, none of the teachers mentioned arguing in their interview responses, while most of them did so in their questionnaire responses.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Missing, N = 2

When asked about the most serious kind of pupil conflict in their schools, the responses given were *bullying, falling out* and *older pupils beating up younger ones*. Two teacher responses were missing for this question.

Question: What is the most serious kind of pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Interview responses

Name-calling/taking someone's belongings

"Already when they take each other's belongings and when they call each other nick names because I am so against that because it can develop from there."

Bullying

"When one pupil keeps bullying and harassing another pupil."

"I would say that the most serious pupil conflict at our school is when one or more pupils is bullying another/other pupils."

"Bullying"

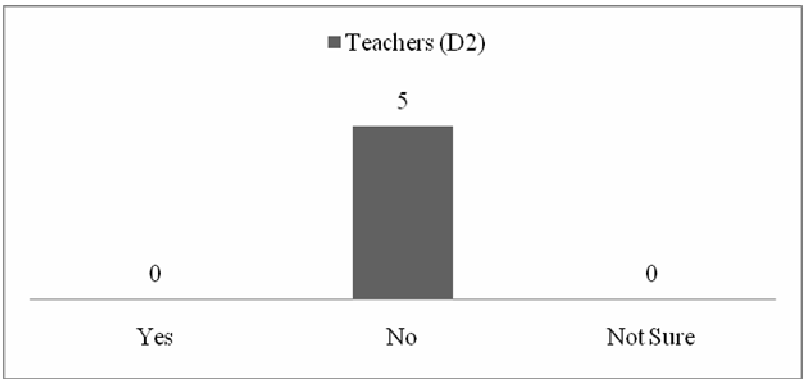
Fighting

"Physical fights."

Overall, most teachers in D2 mentioned *bullying* as the most serious pupil conflict in their school, other responses included; name-calling, fighting, older pupils picking on younger pupils and taking someone else's belongings.

Question: Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Not a single teacher in D2 recognized self-harm as a pupil conflict in their school. All five teachers said no to self-harm being a pupil problem in their school, indicating that in these teachers' minds pupils in their school do not self-harm.

Question: Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?

Interview responses

No

"No, not at this school."

"I don't think so."

"I have not witnessed or had to deal with self-harming."

"No, I have never seen or heard about any of our pupils self-harming."

"I have never heard about that happening, I haven't heard anything about cutting either, no. I haven't heard of emos either you know that extreme culture … I haven't seen or heard of any of that."

Interestingly enough all teachers, both in their questionnaire and interview responses said *no* to self-harm being a pupil problem in their school. This affirms that these teachers in D2 do not see self-harm as a pupil problem in their school.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same views of pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes, I do think that."

"Yes, they share the same notion."

No

"I think that the teachers perceive, I mean I would perceive bullying as a type of conflict. It's very hard even though its small words where the pupils think, oh it's just … so I think that the teachers are more aware and alert than the pupils are because they view it as just little things that slipped out of their mouth, whereas the teachers take it more seriously and are more aware of the consequences, so I don't think that."

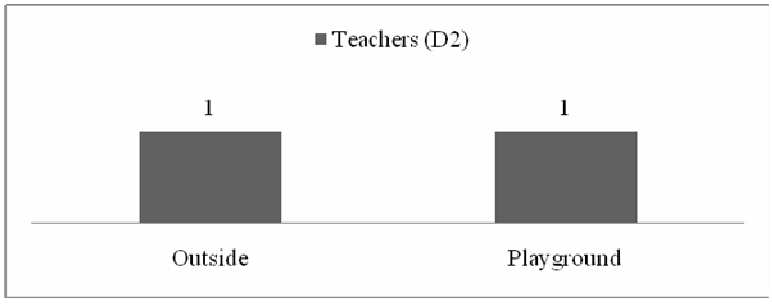
It depends on the conflict

"I think that it depends on the conflict, but some teachers are pretty good at sharing the same idea of conflict as pupils do."

Most teachers said that pupils and teachers and pupils in their school did share the same notions of pupil conflict. One teacher said that it depended on the conflict and another teacher said that teachers and pupils did not share the same notions of pupil conflict.

Question: Where in school does most pupil conflict take place?

Questionnaire responses



Total N = 2, missing N = 3 (the missing teacher responses for this questionnaire were responses that were discarded as they did not answer the question. The responses not included were: during recess, in the younger years and in the older years).

Due the fact that most teachers responses for this question were not valid, the responses given were from only two teachers, one who said *outside* and one who said in the *playground*.

Question: Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Interview responses

In the playground

"In the playground."

"Outside, in the playground."

In the class/room

"Mostly in class."

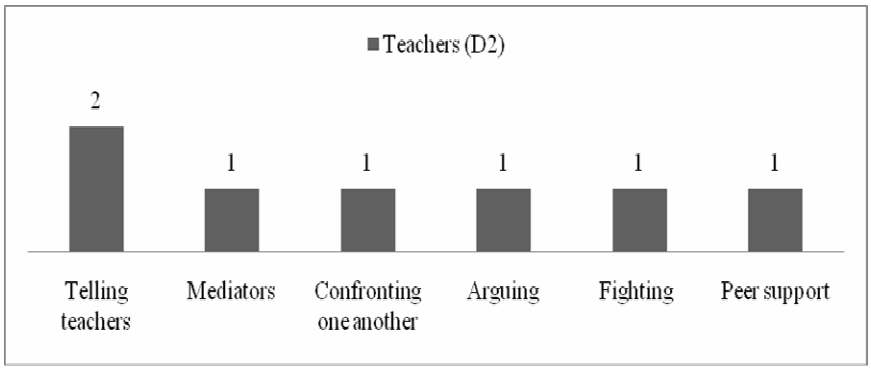
"In the classroom."

The teacher interview responses to where most pupil conflict took place included the classroom and the playground.

5.2.2 Teacher responses to conflict in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Questionnaire responses



When asked in what ways pupils resolved or managed their conflicts in school the most frequent teacher response was by *telling teachers*. Other responses included mediators, arguing, fighting, and turning to the peer support.

Question: What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

Interview responses

Talking

"They talk to their class teachers about them."

Conflict mediators

"They go to the conflict mediators."

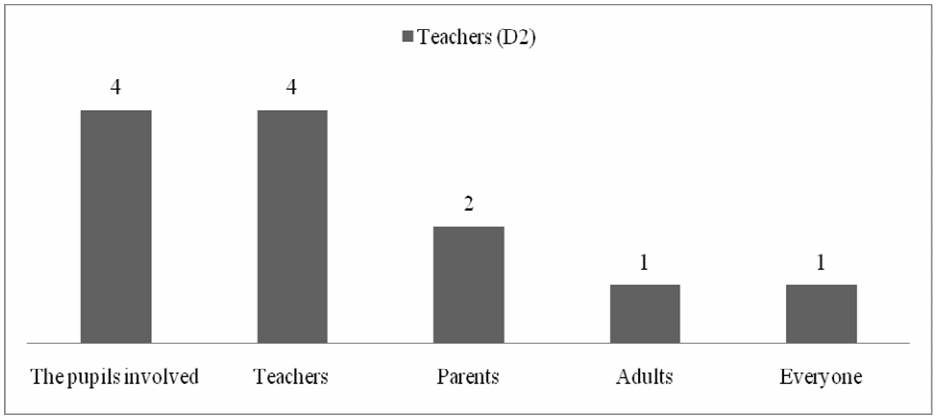
They get upset/ angry

"Conflict is never good, so they get upset and angry of course but if it's conflicts that they can solve then they put it behind them afterwards."

The teacher interview responses to the ways that pupils resolve or manage their conflicts reflected the questionnaire responses with a mixture of responses such as teachers, mediators and pupils themselves.

Question: Whose responsibility do you think it is to reduce/manage pupil conflicts in your school?

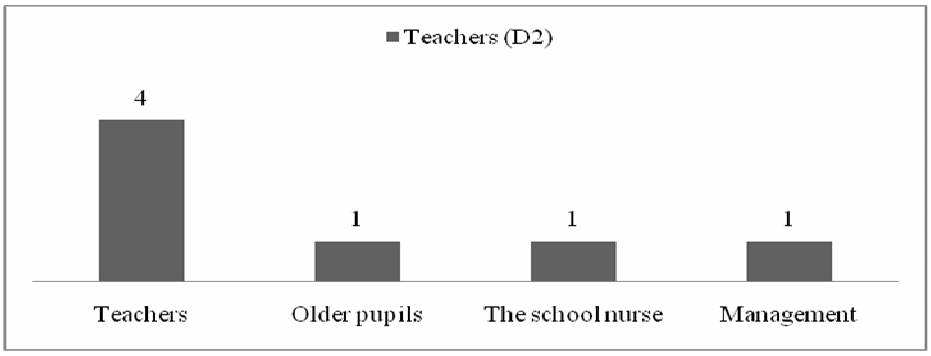
Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in D2 said that it was the responsibility of *teachers* and of those *pupils involved* in the pupil conflicts to reduce or manage the conflicts. Other responses included; parents, adults and everyone's.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Questionnaire responses



Most teachers in D2 said that pupils would turn to *teachers* if they had a problem at school. Some teachers said that they would talk to older pupils. Other teacher responses included the school nurse and the school management.

Question: If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

Interview responses

Teacher

"They talk to their class teacher."

"A teacher."

"Their class teacher."

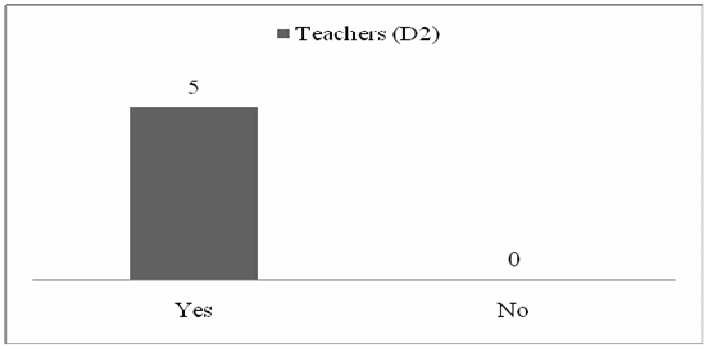
Conflict mediators

"Conflict mediators."

The majority of teachers said that pupils would turn to teachers if they had a problem at school.

Question: Do you think the staff in your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses



All teachers in D2 said *yes* in their questionnaire responses to feeling that the staff in their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts.

Question: Do you think the staff in your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes."

"The staff at this school are really good at noticing and dealing with pupil conflict."

"Yes, they are pretty good at managing pupil conflicts."

"Yes, I believe so."

All teachers in D2 confirmed their questionnaire responses, all also saying in their interview responses that they thought that the staff at their school were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts in their school.

5.2.3 Teacher awareness of school policies in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"There is an anti-bullying policy. Otherwise we have a general rule to stay in certain locations in the class and working on a zero tolerance policy in class if you do or say something wrong in class you are out."

"We have "Familie Klasser" [Family Classes] where the pupils come to class with their parents or parents or guardians and they get material to the material class with the parents as opposed to the regular class in order to better communicate with parents and then they write down goals in the book at the end of class, i.e. Need to listen better, or need to be kinder and then when they go to their normal lessons they give their class teacher the book and the class teacher will see if they have reached the goals that they had set themselves i.e. listen better, be kinder and will give them points if they have. This is in every lesson and all day and it is for pupils who are especially weak in a certain area, i.e. school work, behaviour etc… It's for all kids that are struggling in some way whether it is social, emotional, communicational etc…"

"SSP- Skole, Socialforvaltning og Politi (School, Social Services and Police) … cooperate with different resources, the school, counsellor, outside of school, for older pupils who are involved with criminal behaviours."

"We have pupil mediators that consist of two pupils from each year group and give them responsibility for the pupils and to build relationships with the pupils and to help manage conflicts that arise."

"We have an anti-bullying policy."

All teachers in D2 showed awareness of some school policies that dealt with pupil conflicts. A variety of policies and strategies were mentioned, including: pupil mediators, an anti-bullying policy, zero tolerance policy, family classes and outside agencies.

Question: Do you feel that the school policies are helpful in reducing or stopping pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes because they give both the teachers and the pupils an idea of the consequences of certain behaviours."

"Yes, the fact that you can have pupils in a class discussing a conflict that has happened earlier and help find solutions, is quite effective."

"Yes."

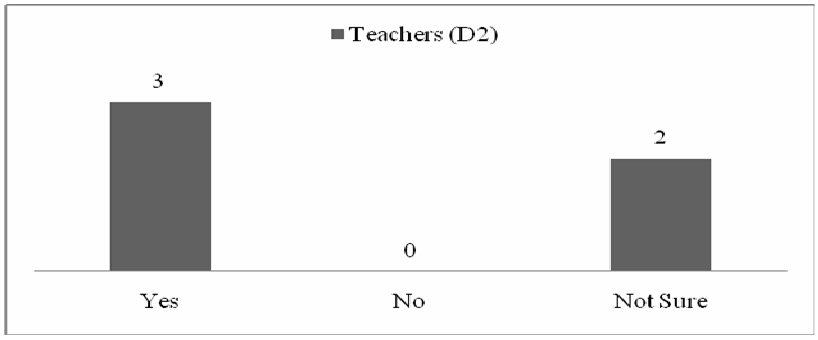
"Yes, they are very effective and they encourage open discussions about conflicts and really get the pupils involved, so yes."

"I think they are, yes."

All five teachers were asked if they felt that the school policies were helpful in reducing or stopping pupil conflicts and all of them said, yes.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Three out of five teachers in D2 said that there was an anti-bullying policy in their school, and two teachers said that they were not sure.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"We do have an anti-bullying policy, yes."

"Yes, we do."

"I believe so."

No

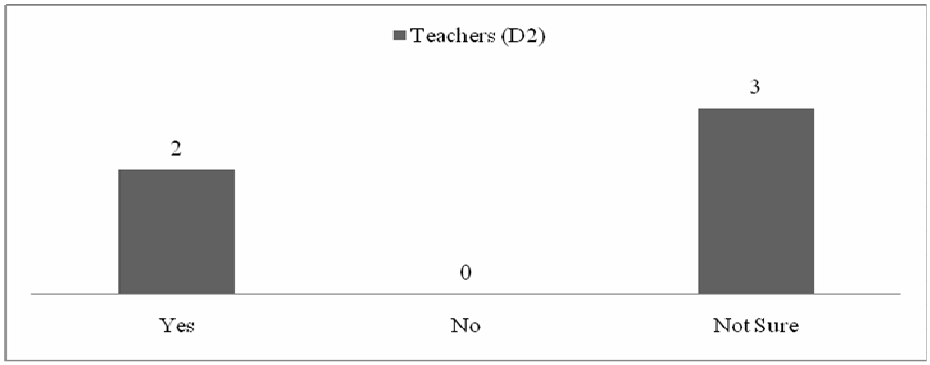
"Not sure."

"I don't know to be honest."

The teacher interview responses corresponded with their questionnaire responses in that the majority of teachers who were interviewed said that their school did have an anti-bullying policy.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses



Two out of the five teachers in D2 felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies at their school, while three teachers said that they were not sure.

Question: Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

Yes

"Quite definitely, that is more or less the principle of the class meeting to have the pupils who have the word and who come up with the solutions, of course the teachers help, but the pupils definitely have a say in it. I also think it is the belief that the pupils are the ones involved in the conflict so why wouldn't you involve them?"

"Yes, yes they do."

Not in the policy making, but in the process of solving the conflicts

"Pupils may not be involved in the actual policy making process, but they are definitely involved in the process of solving of the conflicts."

"Not in how it is made [the policy], but I do think that there has been some cooperation with both pupils and teachers and have talked about it and I think they have then set the policy based on that cooperation."

Not sure

"I am not sure to be honest. I think that at some level pupils are involved."

The teacher interview responses to whether pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school was mixed in that some teachers said *yes*, some were *not sure*, and some did not feel that pupils had a say.

5.2.4 Summary of teacher findings in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Perceptions

The teacher questionnaire and interview responses in D2 were consistent overall. However, there were instances where the responses did not show agreement. For instance, when asked what teachers perceived to be the most common pupil conflicts in their schools, most teachers said 'arguments' in their questionnaire responses, but no teachers mentioned arguing in their interview responses. Rather, bullying and fighting were the most mentioned interview responses. In terms of their definitions of conflict, most teachers defined conflict as a disagreement; some also included bullying in their definitions of conflict. Teachers in D2 perceived bullying, falling out and fighting to be the most serious pupil conflicts in their school. An interesting finding was that none of

the teachers in D2 believed that self-harm was a pupil problem in their school, neither in their questionnaire responses nor in their interview responses. This means that no teachers perceived pupils in their school to be self-harming. Teachers had mixed views on the question of whether they thought that teachers and pupils shared the same notions of pupil conflicts, in that some teachers said that it depended on the conflict, while others said that the teachers were more alert and aware than the pupils, and others said that teachers and pupils did share the same notions of pupil conflicts. As for the location of conflict, some teachers said it happened outside, some mentioned the playground and others said the classroom.

Responses

Teachers in D2 said that pupils resolve or manage their conflicts in their school by telling teachers or mediators. When asked who was responsible for managing pupil conflicts in their school, most teachers said teachers or those involved in the conflicts. Moreover, majority of teachers said that pupils would turn to teachers if they had a problem at school. An interesting find was that, when asked if staff were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflict in their school, all teachers said yes in both their questionnaire and interview responses.

Policies

The majority of teachers in D2 were aware of some school policies or measures that addressed pupil conflicts. Some of the policies mentioned by teachers in D2 were an anti-bullying policy, *Familie Klasser* (Family Classes), SSP (School, Social Services, Police), and pupil mediators. When further asked if they felt that the policies they mentioned were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts, all teachers in D2 said yes. When specifically asked if their school had an anti-bullying policy, most teachers said yes and some were not sure. The majority of teachers said in their questionnaire responses that they were not sure if pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, however, in their interview responses, majority said yes.

5.3. Pupil findings from Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

There were a total of 80 completed pupil questionnaires in school D1, out of these pupils nine were interviewed, based on availability. However, there were some

discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses because some pupils either did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, and/or because the interviews were semi-structured and not all pupils were asked exactly the same questions; therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than nine pupils. However, some answers may consist of more than nine response categories as in some cases some pupils gave more than one response to a question.

5.3.1 Pupil perceptions of conflict in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
An argument	46.2%
Fighting	18.7%
Falling out	18.7%
A disagreement	8.7%

From the pupil responses above, it appears that majority of pupils in D1 viewed conflict as verbal. More specifically, most of the pupils defined conflict as an *argument*. This was followed by falling out/ fighting and a disagreement. Other definitions (<5.0%) included: backbiting, rumours, discussion, enmity, yelling, pushing, misunderstandings, an uncomfortable confrontation, not getting along, having it bad with others/when people have a problem with each other, swearing and blood.

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Interview responses

I don't know

"Conflict? Is that working together, um helping each other... oh I don't know what conflict means."

Arguments

"Conflict means to me arguments or confrontation between people."

"When people get into an argument."

"Two people arguing."

"Having an argument."

Not getting along

"When two or more people just don't get along for different reasons."

Backbiting

"When people talk about you behind your back."

Falling out

"When you stop being friends with someone."

Fighting

"Fighting with someone."

The interview responses above supported the pupil questionnaire responses on the definitions of conflict in that they indicated that most pupils in D1 viewed conflict as verbal. Similarly to their questionnaire responses, the majority of pupils in D1 defined conflict as an argument in their interview responses, while some also defined conflict as falling out, disagreements and fighting.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	18.7%
Arguing	13.7%
Swearing/using bad language	10.0%
Backbiting	8.7%
Bullying	8.7

In D1 the most common pupil conflict mentioned was *fighting*. This was followed by arguing, swearing/using bad language and backbiting/ bullying. Other responses (<5.0%) included: misunderstandings, friendship problems, not wanting to play with someone, when someone teases someone else for fun but it develops more and

more, conflict between girls, pushing in the yard, discussions, over football lanes, happy slapping, someone getting hit, and people getting upset.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Fighting

"Fighting."

"When people fight with each other."

"Hitting one another."

Arguing

"Arguing over friendships."

"Two people arguing."

Bullying

"Bullying and calling someone names."

Falling out

"Falling out over something stupid."

Backbiting

"Gossiping about someone behind their back."

Pupils in D1 confirmed in their interview responses above that fighting was the most common pupil conflict in their school. They also acknowledged that arguing, falling out, bullying and name-calling were amongst the most common pupil conflicts in their schools.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	32.5%
Bullying	15.0%

When asked about the most serious pupil conflict in their school, most pupils in D1 said *fighting*, followed by *bullying*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: backbiting, lies, happy slapping, hitting someone, swearing, theft, death threats and violence.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Fighting

"Physical fighting."

"Fighting is the most serious pupil conflict at our school, but it doesn't happen that often."

"People hitting one another."

Cussing

"Cussing matches."

Backbiting

"Talking about someone behind their back."

Bullying

"Bullying."

"Getting bullied."

The pupils interview responses identifying the most serious pupil conflicts confirmed their questionnaire responses, in that fighting was mentioned the most, followed by bullying.

Question: Have you ever self-harmed?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	Hans Christian Andersen
Yes	Count	7
	%	8.9%
No	Count	72
	%	91.1%
Not sure	Count	0
	%	0%
Total	Count	79
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N=1

Although the majority of pupils in D1 reported that they did not self-harm, some pupils reported that they did, and the fact that about 9.0% mentioned that they had self-harmed shows that it is an issue that some pupils in D1 are faced with.

Question: Why did you self-harm?

Interview responses

Stress/coping

"Because things have been rough" (15 year old female pupil).

Gay test

A 12 year old male pupil said that the reason why he self-harmed was:
"Gay test."

Only two pupils from D1 gave reasons to why they self-harmed. One said that it was due to stress/coping, and another said it was a gay test. The latter response is ambiguous, as the reason why the student self-harmed is unclear. Although this response was ambiguous in itself, it is possible he might have self-harmed to show that he is tough or macho, therefore not "gay", or it could be the case that the student was making a reference to a homosexual act that he engaged in which he viewed as being self-harm.

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

"When you hurt yourself to feel better."

"Harming yourself, sometimes cutting and sometimes scratching."

Although only two pupils answered this question, their definitions indicated that they had solid awareness of the meaning of self-harm.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same views of pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes."

"Yeah."

"Mostly."

"I think so."

Not sure

"I'm not sure."

Sometimes

"Sometimes they do and sometimes they are totally off."

No

"I think that teachers could take it a bit more serious than they do. Maybe they think that it's not that big of a deal when in fact to us it is."

The pupil responses above suggest that there were some mixed feelings about whether pupils in D1 felt that pupils and teachers shared the same notions of pupil conflicts. For the most part, pupils in D1 said that pupils and teachers did share the same notions of pupil conflicts.

Question: Where does most pupil conflicts happen?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
In the playground	25.0%
In the classroom	23.7%
Everywhere	10.0%
In the halls	8.7%

The majority of pupils in D1 said that most pupil conflicts happen in the *playground*. This was followed by the *classroom*, *everywhere*, and in the *halls*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: In the football fields, at home, outside school, in the younger and middle years, and in the older years.

Question: Where does most pupil conflict happen?

Interview responses

In the halls

"In the halls, between lessons."

In the classroom

"In the classroom."

"During the lesson."

In the playground

"In the playground."

"In the schoolyard."

"The playground."

Outside/ in the fields

"Outside."

"In the fields."

The pupil interview response from D1 support the pupil questionnaire responses in that most pupils said that pupil conflicts happen mostly in the *playground*, followed by the classroom and the halls.

5.3.2 Pupil response to conflict in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: Most conflicts can be resolved by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Talking about them/telling someone	48.7%
Fighting/using violence	10.0%

When asked the sentence completion question "most conflicts can be resolved by…" the majority of pupils in D1 said, *talking about them or telling someone*. The second most frequent response given was *fighting or using violence*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: solving, avoiding, apologizing, disagreeing, love, compromising, teachers, pupil mediators and friends.

Question: Pupils settle their conflicts in my school by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Talking about them/telling someone	32.5%
Fighting	21.2%
Getting help	10.0%
Avoiding	7.5%

The above results suggest that pupils perceived other pupils in their school to settle their conflicts mainly by talking about them, followed by *fighting*, *getting help* or *avoiding* them. However the main response given was to *talk about them or to tell someone*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: avoiding, snitching, arguing, and hitting.

Question: When I fall out with someone, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Solve it	45.0%
Avoid it	18.7%
Fight	11.2%

When asked what pupils do when they fall out with someone, the majority mentioned that they would *solve it*. Some said they would *avoid it* and others said that they would *fight*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: using harsh words, talking back and getting angry/ upset.

Question: When someone falls out with me, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Solve it	38.7%
Avoid it	18.7%
Fight	7.5%

Most pupils in D1 said that they would *solve* their issues when someone fell out with them. This was followed by *avoidance* and *fighting*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: verbal abuse (using harsh wards), being upset, argue, and be aggressive.

Question: It is……'s responsibility to manage pupil conflicts at my school

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Teachers'	28.7%
Those involved	23.7%
Mediators'	13.7%

The majority of pupils in D1 felt that it was *teachers'* responsibility to manage pupil conflicts at their school. A significant number of pupils also mentioned that *those pupils involved* with the conflicts and the *mediators* were responsible for managing

pupil conflicts at their school. Other responses (<5.0%) included: everybody, the big ones, adults, parents and school management.

Question: Do you think the adults in your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses

			Hans Christian Andersen
Denmark	**Yes**	Count	28
		% within school	35.9%
	No	Count	19
		% within school	24.4%
	Not sure	Count	31
		% within school	39.7%
	Total	Count	78
		% within school	100.0%

Total missing, N = 3

The majority of pupils said that they were *not sure* whether the adults in their school were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts, however, a significant number of pupils did feel that the adults at their school did enough.

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Friends	35.0%
Family	28.7%
Teachers	26.2%
Nobody	10.0%

The results suggest that more pupils would talk to their *friends* about their problems than to their *family* or *teachers*. However, some pupils said that they would talk to their friends and teachers if they had a problem at school. In some cases pupils said that they would speak to nobody, this could be because they either had nobody to

talk to or because they did not feel comfortable enough to tell anybody. Other responses (<5.0%) included: mediators.

5.3.3 Pupil awareness of school policies in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

"We have Klassens Time (The Class Hour/Lesson),where we use the class lesson to discuss conflicts."

"I think we have an anti-bullying policy."

"We have a bullying policy that says that any pupils who bully other pupils will get into trouble."

"We deal with conflicts with Kort og Godt (Card & Good)."

"The AKT (Behaviour, Communication, Welfare)teachers play a big role in dealing with pupil conflicts, especially bullying."

"Yes…we have weekly meetings where the teachers ask the students if they have any conflicts that they want to discuss or deal with in the class…or if somebody has gotten into a conflict before that class the class will deal with it."

For the most part, pupils seemed to be aware of some kind of policy/conflict management measure within their schools. The fact that the policies and measures that were mentioned varied indicates that there is more than one way that pupil conflict is managed in D1.

Question: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Don't know

"I don't know."

Yes

"I think that Kort og Godt is helpful in managing pupil conflicts because it allows us to talk about their problems with adult supervision."

"Yes, I think they are but I prefer to talking to my teacher rather than going through the school."

"I think that talking to the mediators really helps."

"Some are and some aren't…I think that the most helpful is the teachers because they talk to you and try to find out what the problem is, and they know you the best so they can better help you."

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Questionnaire responses

		Hans Christian Andersen
Yes	Count	41
	%	51.9%
No	Count	5
	%	6.3%
Not sure	Count	33
	%	41.8%
Total	Count	79
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 1

Although most pupils (over half) in D1 said *yes* to there being an anti-bullying policy in their school, a significant number of pupils were *not sure* as to whether D1 has such a policy.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	Hans Christian Andersen
Yes	Count	15
	%	20.0%
No	Count	55
	%	73.3%
Not sure	Count	5
	%	6.7%
Total	Count	75
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 5

While some pupils in D1 felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school, a significant 73.3% said that they did not feel that they had a say. Less than 10.0% of the pupils were not sure if they had a say in the anti-bullying policy in their school.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

No

"No."

"No."

"No."

"No, we are not asked about the policies."

Not sure

"I think so, I am not sure."

The pupil interview response from D1 affirms their questionnaire responses that overall, pupils in D1 do not feel that they have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

5.3.4 Summary of pupil findings in Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

Perceptions

Most pupils in D1 defined conflict as an argument. According to pupils in D1, the most common and most serious pupil conflict in their school was fighting. Although the majority of pupils in D1 said that they did not self-harm, there were a few cases where pupils some admitted to self-harming. When asked about their perceptions of pupil and teacher views on pupil conflicts, there were mixed feelings, with most pupils saying that they did feel that they shared the same views as teachers, some pupils were not sure, and one pupil did not feel that the teachers took pupil conflicts seriously enough. In terms of pupil perceptions of the location of most pupil conflicts, the majority of pupils mentioned the playground.

Responses

Pupils in D1 said that most conflicts can be resolved by talking about them or telling someone. They believed other pupils in their school to settle their conflicts by talking about them or telling someone as well. Most pupils said that when they fall out with someone and/or when someone falls out with them, they usually manage the conflict by solving it. When asked who they felt were responsible for managing pupil conflicts at their school, the majority of pupils in D1 mentioned teachers. However, when asked who they would talk to if they had a problem at school, most pupils said their friends.

Policies

With reference to school policies, most pupils were aware that their school had some policies and procedures for managing pupil conflicts. The policies mentioned by pupils were; *Klassens Time* (the class hour), an anti-bullying policy and *Kort og Godt* (Card and Good). When specifically asked if their school had an anti-bullying policy, more than half of the pupils showed awareness by answering *yes*. Finally, when asked if

they felt that they had a say in these policies, the great majority of pupils (73.3%) in D1 said *no*.

5.4 Pupil findings in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

There were a total of 69 completed pupil questionnaires in D2. Due to time constraints not all pupils were interviewed. There were a total of eight pupils interviewed. However, there were some discrepancies in the questionnaire and interview responses either because some pupils did not give a response to some of the questionnaire questions, and / or because the interviews were semi-structured; not all pupils were asked exactly the same questions and therefore some questions will have responses from fewer than eight pupils. However, some answers may consist of more than eight responses, as in some instances some pupils gave more than one response to a question.

5.4.1 Pupil perceptions of conflict in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
An argument	37.6%
Falling out	21.7%
A fight	14.4%
A disagreement	13.0%
The use of bad language	5.7%

The majority of pupils in D2 defined conflict as an *argument*. Some pupils defined it as *falling out*, a *fight*, and *disagreements*. Other definitions (<5.0%) included: misunderstandings, lies, backbiting, name-calling, bullying, a discussion, being mad at one another, having problems with others that you can't get solved easily.

Question: What does "conflict" mean to you?

Interview responses

An argument

"It's not really something that I like, arguments and getting too rude to people."

"Arguing with one another."

"Having an argument with someone."

"Arguing."

Name-calling

"Swearing and name-calling."

Falling out

"When you stop being someone's friend because they have upset you."

Fighting

"When people fight."

A disagreement

"When people don't agree with each other."

Most pupils from D2 also defined conflict as verbal in their interview responses as in their questionnaire responses. The most mentioned verbal definition was *an argument*. Other definitions included disagreements, falling out, name-calling and fighting.

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Arguing	13.0%
Bullying	11.5%
Fighting	5.7%

The pupil questionnaire responses above suggests that the most common pupil conflict in D2 is *arguing*, which is then followed by *bullying*, and *fighting*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: misunderstandings, lies, rumours, gossip, backbiting, disagreements, dissing, exclusion, yelling, racism, discrimination, political views, falling out, swearing, the use of bad language, when balls get taken, when there is snow and when people are playing games. One (1.4%) pupil said "hate towards foreigners, connected with bullying."

Question: What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

An argument

"Arguments."

"Two or more people being in an argument and not talking to one another."

"Arguments, mostly between girls."

Name-calling

"Calling someone a name."

Bullying

"Bullying."

Racism

"Racism."

Teasing

"Teasing someone because they look different from you."

Physical violence

"Beating someone up."

The pupil interview responses to the question of the most common pupil conflict also (like the questionnaire responses) indicates that pupils in D2 view *arguments* as the most common pupil conflicts in their schools.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Fighting	21.7%
Bullying	10.1%

When asked about the most serious pupil conflict at their school, most pupils in D2 said *fighting*, followed by *bullying*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: violence, the use of bad language, arguments, discussions, discrimination, rumours, assault and attack and there aren't any that are that serious.

Question: What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

Interview responses

Fighting

"Physical fighting."

"Fighting where one or more people are bleeding from the face."

"Fighting amongst the boys."

"Hitting one another."

Bullying

"Making fun of someone because they are different."

"Bullying someone because they are younger than you."

"Bullying."

Name-calling

"Calling someone a name."

"Swearing at someone."

Threats

"Threats."

The pupil interview responses in D2 support their questionnaire responses, in that a lot of pupils said that *fighting/violence* was the most serious pupil conflict in their school. The second most frequented response for that question was bullying.

Question: Have you ever self-harmed?

Questionnaire responses

[redacted]	[redacted]	**Frederik Nielsen**
Yes	Count	10
	%	14.7%
No	Count	58
	%	85.3%
Not sure	Count	0
	%	0%
Total	Count	68
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N=1

The pupil questionnaire responses above to the question "have you ever self-harmed" shows that some pupils in D2 do self-harm.

Question: Why did you self-harm?

Questionnaire responses

Within Frederik Nielsen School, four response categories were identified to explain why pupils self-harmed. These are: low self-esteem, boredom, psychological problems and anger. The first category that will be looked at is 'low self-confidence/esteem.'

Low self-confidence/esteem

"Because if I feel bad about myself or cannot solve my problem"(13 year old female pupil).

Boredom

A second response category to why pupils self-harm is 'boredom.' Below are the pupil responses:

"I'm bored" (14 year old male pupil).

Similarly another male pupil (13 year old) contended that he self-harmed because he was bored:

"I was bored."

Private

One pupil felt that it was a private matter that was being dealt with accordingly and as such did not want to discuss the issue with me. She said in response to why she self-harms:

"*I cannot write it in so few lines! And besides, I see a psychologist for it every month and do not feel that it is necessary to tell the school about it when I get help in advance"* (14 year old female).

Similarly, another pupil reported that her self-harming was not a concern of the schools, however she did say that the reason why she self-harmed was due to some psychological problems (a third response category as to why pupils self-harm). She said:

"Due to mental problems that are not of concern to the school" (13 year old female).

Although these two pupils did not indicate any specific reasons for their self-harm, they did yield some important data. For instance, they both recognized it as a problem and admitted that they were getting help for it. Moreover, both pupils mentioned that the help that they were getting from it was from outside of school. One possible explanation for these pupils getting help from outside the school could be because they do not feel comfortable discussing it with staff or because the school may not have the necessary resources or the facilities to help them.

Anger

A fourth and most frequent response category for why pupils self-harmed at Frederik Nielsen School was 'anger'. Below are some examples:

"Was angry."(13 year old male pupil).

"I was sad/ angry." (14 year old female pupil).

"I was angry and aggressive." (15 year old female).

The pupil interview responses above confirm the questionnaire responses that some pupils in D2 do self-harm. Most pupils who said that they self-harmed also gave reasons why they self-harmed. This included anything from being angry, sad, bored to having low self-esteem.

Question: What does self-harm mean to you?

Interview responses

"It means to hurt yourself in order to feel better."
"Cutting yourself."
"Making yourself feel pain."
"Scratching yourself till you feel better."
"Banging your head on the wall."

Based on the definitions of self-harm above, it appears that pupils had a sound knowledge of the meaning of self-harm.

Question: Do you think that pupils and teachers share the same views of pupil conflict?

Interview responses

No

"No."
"No, I think that they are different."

I don't know

"I don't know."

Yes

"I think so."

"Yes."

"Yeah."

It appears from interview responses that there are mixed perceptions on whether pupils and teachers share the same notions of pupil conflicts, with slightly more pupils saying yes.

Question: Where do most pupil conflicts happen?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
In the playground	27.5%
In the classroom	21.7%
Everywhere	8.6%

Most pupils in D2 said that most pupil conflicts at their school happened in the *playground*, then the *classroom*, followed by *everywhere*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: in the halls, in the grassy fields, in the football lane, between lessons, in the younger years, in the older years, and during recess.

Question: Where does most pupil conflict happen?

Interview responses

The playground/schoolyard

"In the yard."

"The schoolyard."

"In the playground."

"Outside, in the schoolyard."

In the class/room

"In the class."

"In the classroom."

The pupil interview responses also confirmed their questionnaire responses in that majority of pupils mentioned the *schoolyard* as the place where most pupil conflicts happened, followed by the classroom.

5.4.2 Pupil responses to conflict in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: Most conflicts can be resolved by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Talking about them/telling someone	62.3%
Getting help	5.7%
Avoiding them	5.7%

The results from the table above suggest that the great majority of pupils in D2 believe that most pupil conflicts can be resolved by *talking to or telling someone*. Other responses (<5.0%) included: taking five minutes to relax, solving them, apologizing, by those involved, someone stopping it, fighting, and beating up the person.

Question: Pupils settle their conflicts at my school by…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Talking about them/telling someone	31.8%
Fighting	7.2%

Again, the majority of pupils in D2 felt that *talking*, or *telling someone* was how pupils at their schools settle their conflicts. Other responses (<5.0%) included: solving them, apologizing, arguing, backbiting, avoiding, mediators, someone stopping it, using bad language, hitting and someone stopping it.

Question: When I fall out with someone, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Frequency
Solve it	46.3%
Avoid it	24.6%

The table above suggests that there are two main routes that pupils in D2 take when they fall out with someone: to *solve* or to *avoid*. The majority of the pupils, however, said that they would *solve* their issues when they fall out with someone. Other responses (<5.0%) included: fight, answer back, get sad, annoy them, say something nasty, flip out, take it with a smile and I don't/never fall out with anybody.

Question: When someone falls out with me, I usually…

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Frequency**
Try to solve it/make up	36.2%
Avoid it	18.8%
Talk/tell someone	17.3%

Again, the majority of pupils in D2 said that they try to *solve the problem* or *make up* when someone has fallen out with them. Some pupils said that they would avoid the issue, while others said that they would talk to someone about it or tell someone. Other responses (<5.0%) included: apologize, be sad, be upset, get help from teachers, flip out completely, take it with a smile, become pissed off, hit them, and I never fall out with anyone.

It is…….'s responsibility to manage pupil conflicts at my school

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	**Percentage**
Teachers'	24.6%.
Those pupils involved	21.7%
Mediators'	7.2%

When asked whose responsibility pupils thought it was to manage pupil conflicts at their school, the majority of pupils in D2 said the *teachers*. Others said those pupil involved and the mediators. Other responses (<5.0%) included: everyone's, friends, parents, and it varies.

Question: Do you think the adults in your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

Questionnaire responses

			Frederik Nielsen
Denmark	**Yes**	Count	25
		% within school	36.2%
	No	Count	11
		% within school	15.9%
	Not sure	Count	33
		% within school	47.8%
	Total	Count	69
		% within school	100.0%

Total missing, N = 0

While a majority of pupils in D2 were not sure whether the adults at their school were doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflict, a noteworthy proportion did feel that the adults were doing enough.

Question: If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

Questionnaire responses

Response categories	Percentage
Friends	31.8%
Family	31.8%
Teachers	28.9%
Nobody	7.2%

When asked who pupils would talk to if they had a problem, the most frequently mentioned categories were *friends*, *family* and *teachers*. Although the data suggests that most pupils in D2 preferred to talk to their friends or family, a lot also said that they would talk to teachers. Other responses (<5.0%) included: staff and the person I am having the issue with.

5.4.3 Pupil awareness of school policies in Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

Question: Does your school have any policies that deal with conflict?

Interview responses

Yes

"We have an anti-bullying policy."

"We have klassens time where conflicts are addressed by teachers and pupils; we also have an anti-bullying policy."

"Anti-bullying policy."

Not sure

"I am not sure."

No

"No we don't have any policies that deal with conflict."

The interview responses above suggest that some pupils are aware of the policies at their schools while others are not too sure.

Question: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts?

Interview responses

Yes

"Yes I do."

"Most of the time they are helpful."

"My class teacher is very helpful."

"Yes the anti-bullying policy lets you know that you will get into trouble if you bully someone else."

"Sometimes."

When asked if pupils felt that the policies they mentioned above were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts at their school, most pupils felt that they were.

Question: Is there an anti-bullying policy in your school?

Questionnaire responses

		Frederik Nielsen
Yes	Count	25
	%	38.5%
No	Count	6
	%	9.2%
Not sure	Count	34
	%	52.3%
Total	Count	65
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 4

The majority of the pupils in D2 said that they were not sure whether there was a specific anti-bullying policy at their schools, while a substantial number of pupils acknowledged that there was one.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Questionnaire responses

		Frederik Nielsen
Yes	Count	12
	%	21.1%
No	Count	41
	%	71.9%
Not sure	Count	4
	%	7.0%
Total	Count	57
	%	100.0%

Total missing, N = 12

When asked if pupils felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their schools a significant percentage (71.9%) of pupils said *no*. However, there were some pupils who did feel that they had a say on the anti-bullying policies in their school.

Question: Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

Interview responses

No

"No."

"No."

"Nope."

"No I don't."

Yes

"Yes."

The interview responses further confirmed the questionnaire responses (above) that overall, the majority of pupils in D2 did not feel that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their school.

5.4.4 Summary of pupil findings in Frederik Nielsen School, D2

Perceptions of conflict

Most pupils in school D2 defined conflict as verbal. For example, when asked what conflict meant to them, most pupils defined conflict as *an argument*. Also, when asked about the most common pupil conflict in their school, *arguments* were also mentioned by most pupils. However, when asked for the most serious pupil conflicts in their school, most pupils said *fighting*. There was an even divide in pupil responses to the question of whether they felt that pupils and teachers shared the same notions of pupil conflicts in that half of the pupils interviewed did and the other half didn't. As for the location of conflict, the majority of pupils said that most pupil conflicts happened in the playground.

Responses to conflict

In reference to responses to conflicts, the majority of pupils in D2 felt that most conflicts could be resolved by *talking about them/* or *telling someone*. They also

believed that pupils settled their conflicts in their schools by *talking about them* or *telling someone*. Most pupils said that both when they fall out with someone and when someone falls out with them that they would try and *solve the issue* or *making up*. When asked who they thought was responsible for managing pupil conflicts in their school, the most frequent pupil response in D2 was *teachers.* When pupils were further asked who they would talk to if they had a problem in school, most pupils said to their *friends and family*.

Policies

Most pupils in D2 were aware of some school policies and procedures that dealt with pupil conflict. Those mentioned by pupils in D2 were an *anti-bullying policy* and *Klassens Time*. When specifically asked if their school had an anti-bullying policy, just over half the pupils were not sure, and just fewer than 40.0% of pupils showed awareness. When asked if they felt that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies the majority of pupils in D2 said *no*.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented data collected from teachers and pupils in the two schools in Denmark (D1 and D2). The data was centred on teachers' and pupils' perceptions of, and responses to conflict, and their awareness of school policies that dealt with conflict. Overall, the results showed more similarities in perceptions of conflict than not. For instance, both pupil and teachers in Denmark defined conflict as verbal. Apart from the similarity of pupils' and teachers' perceptions of conflict, a significant difference was that, overall, more Danish teachers than pupils felt that pupils had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their schools.

Chapter 6

Classroom Observations and Documentation

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the observations that were undertaken in the classrooms in England and Denmark and briefly considers the documentary data collected from E2, explaining why that data was not used in this research. The classroom observations were valuable, in both England and Denmark, in reinforcing the questionnaire and interview responses.

In the two English schools observations took place during PSHE lessons and I witnessed actual conflicts in both schools, such as fights breaking out in lessons, harassment, name-calling, teasing, and gossip. In the Danish schools, the classroom observations took place during *Klassens Time* when *Kort og Godt* was applied. The observations from the Danish schools were also valuable as they yielded information about the types of pupil conflicts that occurred and the measures that the teachers took to resolve them. In the majority of the observations in both schools in Denmark no conflict was discussed during the lessons, so the lesson was used as a 'free' lesson. This was the case in both D1 and D2. Pupils chose to engage in whatever activity they wanted, as long as it was in the classroom and as long as it was carried out quietly. However, in the instances where conflicts did break out (either before or during lessons) observational data was recorded and presented and will be discussed later in the chapter.

There were a total of seven observation sessions undertaken in school E1, out of which five provided some insight into aspects of conflict. In school E2, four out of nine observation sessions provided insights to contribute to the data. In the Danish school, D1, there were a total of five observations of which four were fruitful; from a total of five observations in school D2, two provided insight into pupil conflict. In summary, overall there was a total of nine useful observation sessions from the two English

schools and a total of six useful observations from the two Danish schools, all of which will be discussed below.

6.1 Classroom observations, England

6.1.1 Classroom observations, Edward Elgar School (E1)

March 11, 2009 **Year 9**

There were 17 pupils in this class. The majority of the pupils were Asian males, and there were only four female pupils. I was told by the teacher that she had given the pupils seating arrangements at the beginning of the term. The topic of the lesson was Careers and You. Pupils were meant to be working on a project. For the most part, the pupils were sitting quietly doing their work. One male pupil was texting in the back of the classroom. I was sitting in the back of the classroom as well.

Scenario 1

A male pupil walked by a female pupil and slapped her on the head. The female pupil then yelled: *"Miss … leave me alone!"* But the teacher rounded on her when she heard the girl scream. The girl said *"but Miss…it wasn't me who started it."* The teacher replied, "*One more word out of you (name of pupil) and I will send you outside!"* The male pupil who had slapped the female pupil looked and pointed at the female pupil with a smirk on his face.

The scenario above both suggests that this teacher's understanding of pupil conflict might be inaccurate or biased, but also might explain why pupils might not turn to teachers to resolve their conflicts or problems.

March 18, 2009 **Year 9**

This class consisted of a total of 22 pupils; the majority of the pupils were male, with only seven female pupils. There was a gender divide in the seating arrangements, in that the female pupils sat together and the male pupils sat together. Every pupil in this class was of ethnic minority. The teacher took register

at the beginning of the lesson. The topic of the lesson was spread sheets, and the pupils were meant to be practising filling out spread sheets. It was a very busy lesson in that a lot was going on, such as pupils chatting to one another; one pupil was listening to music on his iPod, put his earphones in and covered his ears with his hand. Halfway through the lesson, a female pupil walked in and sat down. As usual, I sat in the back of the lesson for my observations.

Scenario 1

Two female pupils were discussing something about another pupil.

Scenario 2

One male pupil got up and told a boy sitting next to him that he was stupid, slapped him and walked away.

Scenario 1 is a prime example of the type of verbal conflict mentioned in the teacher and pupil questionnaires. This backbiting or gossiping was mentioned in all schools as one of the most common forms of conflict taking place. In the second scenario, both verbal and physical conflict is present. Teachers and pupils mentioned that verbal conflict, such as calling someone a name, often leads to physical conflict. This was exactly the case in the observation above.

March 18, 2009 **Year 10**

There were a total of 23 pupils in this class, all of who were either Asian or Black. The majority of the pupils in the lesson were male, with only five females. There were four rows of tables one in front of the other. The first, second and fourth rows were filled with pupils sitting on the tables. Row four consisted of all male pupils. There was only one pupil sitting on the table in row three. I was sitting in the back of the lesson. The topic of the lesson was Personal Safety. The teacher started the lesson by showing the pupils a few video clips from different police videos. Ten minutes into the lesson a female pupil walks into the class with a late note, the teacher tells her to sit down. A male pupil walks in a few minutes after the female pupil walked in and sits down. The general feel of the lesson is a

quiet but active one, with pupils' passing notes back and forth, flipping the teacher the finger behind her back. One male pupil from row four passes a note to the male pupil sitting in row three. Another male pupil pulled out his phone and started to text.

Scenario 1

One male pupil elbowed another male pupil in the stomach as he walked by him. The pupil who was elbowed went *"aw"*. That was the end of their exchange.

Scenario 2

A male pupil walked over to another male pupil's table and started rifling through his notes and then his hair, then he walked away.

Scenario 3

A male pupil sitting in row four randomly yells *"retarded"*.

These observations mirror the responses from the pupil questionnaires in E1. The pupils stated that physical forms of conflict, in this instance elbowing, was common. Moreover, the pupils also stated that actions such as that in scenario 2 were prevalent. These observations suggest that the pupils in E1 were very aware of the types of conflict occurring in their schools.

March 18, 2009 **Year 11**

This class consisted of 22 pupils. There was a gender division in the seating in that the male and female pupils were sitting on separate tables. The majority of the pupils were Asian male. The topic of the lesson was Pride and Prejudice. Pupils were meant to brainstorm words or phrases that first came to them when they hear the phrase 'pride and prejudice'. The general ethos of the class was rowdy and noisy, and the teacher did not seem to have control over the class. For instance, a male pupil walked with his shoes over his desk and across another desk while the teacher's back was turned. Another instance is a male pupil asking the teacher what the word "f…" means, at which point the teacher replied "I wouldn't shout it out if I were you". A female pupil was leaned over her desk to a male

pupil's desk to chat with him. One male pupil got up and walked over to another table and asked another male pupil what kind of grade he got. A female pupil kept trying to call the teacher, saying *"Sir"*, with her hand up, but the teacher did not reply, so she turned to her mate saying *"it's because of my lisp."* One male pupil fell asleep on the table and started to snore. The teacher never noticed, or at least did not say anything to the pupil. One female pupil turned on an iPod that she was hiding in her headscarf and starts mouthing along to the music.

Scenario 1

One female pupil walked by another female pupil and said, *"oh, it smells like B.O. badly."*

Scenario 2

One male said to another male pupil: *"she is a whore,"* while pointing at a girl in the class. The boy being told this replied: *"I don't know."* The boy making the remark said: *"I heard"*.

Again, these two observations mirror the types of responses provided by the pupils in the questionnaires. Name-calling and insulting one another were cited as some of the most common conflict occurring in E1.

March 18, 2009 Year 7

There were a total of 28 pupils in this class, all of whom were Asian. There were no SEN pupils or teachers in this class, however there was one female teaching assistant. This particular lesson was held in a science lab as opposed to the regular classroom, due to some scheduling mishap. There were a lot of instruments lying around, such as Bunsen burners, beakers and funnels. The topic of the lesson was Rocks and Drugs. The teacher gave the pupils a hand out and they were meant to take turns reading the paragraphs. This was an extremely loud and busy class with a lot going on. For instance, a male pupil was just sitting and messing about; at one point he put on a clown's nose and just sat there looking at

the teacher. He then took the clown nose off and passed it on to another pupil under the table.

Scenario 1

Four girls were working together when one girl took a wet paper funnel and rubbed it on another girl's face. The teacher then asked the girl (not the pupil who did the rubbing, but the girl who had the funnel rubbed in her face) to leave the class. She left in a huff. After about 15 minutes the teacher calls the girl back into the classroom. She comes in quietly, sits down and starts to chat to the girl who rubbed the funnel in her face. She tells the girl: *"you are in trouble"*. They were then chatting nicely to one another, while looking at another girl across the room.

Scenario 2

One male pupil went up to another male pupil and wiped his wet hands on his blazer. The pupil just smiled and kept on doing what he was doing. The male pupil who did the wiping then chased another male pupil and kicked him on the lower leg and ran away to his seat. About ten minutes later he walked by the pupil's chair and slapped him in the back and scurried back to his seat.

Scenario 3

Two male pupils who were working quietly on their homework throughout the lesson started to play fight. One of them started to slap the other; the pupil being slapped then smiled and play-kicked the pupil doing the slapping (both smiling at this time). The male pupil who started the melee in the first place then kicks the other male pupil back and yells: *"stop kicking me!"* and turned to the teaching assistant and said: *"Miss, he is kicking me!"* The teaching assistant did not hear him. The class ended shortly after that.

Scenario three is a prime example of how playful exchanges get out of hand. Pupils said that such was the case in E1; that conflict often arose out of similar exchanges. Interestingly, one of the boys requested a teacher's intervention in the matter, whether that was due to the pupil being open to teacher involvement in their

conflict or because he was trying to get his friend into trouble is unknown. It also shows that teachers do have the ability to manage a situation, as was the case above.

6.1.2 Classroom observations, Charles Dickens School (E2)

February 11, 2009 **Year 11**

Today's lesson was taught by a supply teacher as the class teacher was off sick. There were a total of 26 pupils in the lesson. The majority of pupils were Black and Asian. The topic of the lesson was Business. The teacher handed out a piece of paper and asked the pupils to form four groups of five and one group of six to fill in the handout. The supply teacher told the pupils that I was there because I was thinking of becoming a teacher. The pupils did not take any notice of me. The supply teacher then started to write instructions for the assignment on the board. One boy was bouncing a basketball that he then passed on to another boy. One boy was hugging a girl as she was sitting on a chair eating a packet of crisps. One pupil was yelling something to another pupil across the room. The supply teacher looked at the pupils and told them to be quiet and to get on with their work, and then he went back to writing on the board. One pupil's phone rang and he was asked to turn it off. The tutor said he had to leave for a second and that he would be back soon. The pupil who had been asked to turn his phone off earlier turned it back on and started playing with it.

Scenario 1

One male pupil scrunched up a piece of paper and threw it at another male pupil. The pupil saw the paper coming and ducked.

Scenario 2

During a PSHE tutorial, with the teacher present, the pupils engaged in a number of conflict-laden activities. For example, two male pupils were play fighting, one holding the other in a headlock. However, the play fighting turned into something more serious when the boy in the headlock began punching the pupil holding him in order to break free. This provoked the other pupil to hit back, at which point the teacher intervened and asked one of them to go and wait outside. All through the exchange, the

two male pupils were verbally attacking one another. A few moments later, a few male pupils asked the male pupil who was left in the class what had happened, to which he replied that the other pupil had provoked him. Later the supply teacher told me that the boys were friends and that in order to irk one another, they would often banter, particularly using ethnic comments.

The pupils in E2, like those in E1, stated that most conflicts occurred after a playful start. In both scenarios described above elements of play fighting or 'messing about' are evident. In scenario two, though, the situation escalated beyond 'messing about' into an actual fight. What is interesting is that, while the teacher intervened, he did not do so until it was too late. This suggests that this particular teacher either paid no attention to the fracas, or that he did not recognise the signs that the situation was escalating into something more serious. In either case, his immediate attention and involvement would probably have stopped it from getting worse.

February 11, 2009 **Year 9**

Today's lesson was taught by a class teacher. There were also two teacher's assistants (TAs) present in the lesson. There were a total of ten pupils in the lesson. Two male pupils greeted me as I entered the classroom. The teacher started the lesson with a review of PSHE. She was discussing safe sex, drugs and, in particular, homosexuality as it was LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans) History Month. The pupils were meant to listen to the teacher's presentation and then to have an open discussion about it afterwards. Overall, it was a quiet classroom with three tables placed in the centre of the room in the shape of a horseshoe. The classroom was painted red and had many posters and a few plants in it.

Scenario 1

A female pupil, who seemed visibly upset, was asked how she was doing by the teacher. Her classmate spoke for her, saying, another female pupil had been calling her names. The teacher comforted the pupil by saying: *"Let's take your mind off it now, and we will discuss it after class. Don't let her spoil it for you, you were doing so well"*. The pupil nodded her head and wiped her tears. The teacher then went on to continue with

the lesson. The upset girl called over one of the classroom TAs, as the class continued, to discuss her situation.

The above example was quite interesting because it underlined the importance of having a TA in the classroom. As the teacher was too busy teaching the class, she was unable to tend to the pupil's needs immediately. However, the TA was able to come over straight away and lend the pupil assistance. The theme of having the right resources, and enough of them, was shared by most teachers in England as a reason for why they felt that they were not doing enough to help manage their pupils' conflicts. The luxury of a TA is not possible in all classes let alone all schools in England. Therefore, the teacher was left without the support that he or she would need to help meet the needs of all their pupils.

Scenario 2

Two male pupils were play-fighting (pinching and hitting one another).

Scenario 3

One male pupil pulled a book from another male pupil's bag. He was caught and punched lightly by the pupil whose book he took. Two minutes later, the boy who tried to steal the book, began poking the pupil with a pen cap. The boy being poked reacted by just ignored the boy doing the poking.

February 12, 2009 **Year 7**

This class was made up of 20 pupils, with a proportionate number of male and female pupils. There was a divide in the seating arrangements, in that the female pupils sat together on one side of the classroom, and the male pupils sat together on the other side. The teacher came in and wrote Peer Pressure on the board. Then he looked at the pupils and asked if anybody wanted to comment on the meaning of the term or to state whether they had been through it. I was sitting in the back of the classroom. One female pupil came up to me and invited me to sit with her on her table, I politely declined. A group of female pupils asked me why people like me came to watch their lessons all the time and I said because we want to see what it is like to be a teacher, to which they replied: *"Oh."* The overall mood

of the class consisted of a lot of shouting and things being thrown across the room (especially paper, pencils, and pencil cases). A few girls raised their hands and told the teacher that they smelled gas, to which the supply teacher replied: *"Oh never mind"* (I smelled it too.) There were a variety of conflicts or conflict laden situations witnessed in this class, including backbiting or gossip and a lot of anti-social behaviour, all of which will be presented in the following scenarios.

Scenario 1

A male pupil wandered over to a table where a few female pupils were sitting and asked them about another female pupil's wellbeing. One of the female pupils responded: *"she aborted"*, at which they all looked shocked. The male pupil turned around and went back to his seat.

Scenario 2

A group of female pupils were talking about another female pupil who was not there.

Scenario 3

A male pupil randomly yelled out: *"Oh he just touched my penis,"* pointing to another male pupil who was sitting next to him.

Scenario 4

One male pupil threw a piece of paper at another male pupil who was sitting in front of him. The teacher came over and took the paper.

Scenario 5

Two pupils argued over money owed by one to the other.

Scenario 6

A male pupil asked another male pupil who was sitting in his seat to move. When the pupil refused to move, he began punching him on the head (lightly), until the boy finally gave in and moved.

Scenario 7

A male pupil called to another male pupil who was sitting in front of him, when the pupil turned to look at him, he made masturbatory gestures on a pen.

Scenario 8

One pupil poked the back of an SEN pupil and then began kicking the back of his chair. The boy was warned by the teacher but he kept on. He then told the SEN pupil that he smelled. He began kicking the chair again, which caused the SEN pupil to cry. The instigator then taunted him, copying his crying. Another boy joins in to taunt the SEN pupil. The SEN pupil packs his bags and asks to leave, but the teacher refuses. The poking continues until the end of the lesson.

This last example is most alarming, as the teacher did not comply with the wishes of the SEN pupil, who had asked to be excused from the class. This might imply that the teacher and pupil did not share the same perception of the events and therefore did not adjudge the situation to be one involving serious conflict. While teachers should not comply with all the demands of their pupils, in this particular situation the teacher did not seem to pick up on the pupil's feelings of distress.

February 12, 2009 **Year 10**

This lesson consisted of 15 pupils. There was a mixture of female and male pupils at the tables where the pupils were sitting. There were eight female pupils and seven male pupils, of whom four were SEN pupils who had their own SEN teacher. There was an ethnic mix of pupils in the lesson, consisting of both black and white pupils. I was sitting at the back of the classroom. The topic of the lesson was Magic Mushrooms. The tutor leaned on the table and started to read a text about Magic Mushrooms. The pupils were sitting down and listening intently for the first five minutes of the lesson. When the tutor asked the pupils to get into five groups of three the class started to get noisy and the teachers seemed to have little control over the rest of the lesson. For instance, there was a lot of texting going on, and pupils were walking in and out of the classroom. The classroom door was open during the whole lesson, so there was a lot of outside noise.

Scenario 1

One female pupil said to another female pupil who she was talking to: *"Shut up!"* The girls then stopped talking to one another altogether.

Scenario 2

A male pupil shone a pen light into the eyes of a male SEN pupil who turned to him and said: *"Stop it or I'll throw my bag at you"*. The pupil who shone the light turned to him and said: *"I'll throw this laptop at you."* Then the boy kept shining the light in the SEN pupil's face until the SEN pupil turned away and hid his face on his bag.

Scenario 3

A group of three female pupils in the SEN group were talking about another female pupil. One of them said: *"Nobody likes her"*, while another one said: *"She puts her hair like this"* (while doing a hand gesture). The teacher went over to the SEN table and asked the only boy sitting at the SEN table to stop chatting. The boy got angry and said: *"It wasn't me; I'm getting in trouble for them?"* The teacher later acknowledged this and apologised to the male pupil.

This last example supports pupil perceptions that name-calling and gossiping in E2 was a common conflict. However, it is more telling that the teacher in scenario three blamed the wrong pupil at first. This shows that the teacher was not aware of the situation from the start and then reacted without getting all the details of the situation first. If this is a typical teacher response to these situations, then it is understandable why pupils would feel reluctant to involve teachers in the management of their conflicts (as reflected in many pupil responses from the questionnaires and interviews). Fortunately in this case, though, the teacher realised their mistake and apologised to the pupil.

6.2. Classroom observations, Denmark

6.2.1 Classroom observations, Hans Christian Andersen School (D1)

April 10, 2009 **Year 7**

Scenario 1: Hallway Incident

While standing in the hallway I saw a young black female pupil was chasing a boy of Asian background. As he was running he said: *"You need an illuminator at night, I bet you can't be seen in shadows."* The female pupil did not respond but walked to catch up with him. As she walked towards her classroom, another female pupil tapped her on the shoulder and said*: "Oh you should have heard what he said about you,"* pointing at another boy standing in the hall. She stared at the boy, and then he told her that he was just joking.

This example was outside the classroom and as a result, out of the view of the teachers. However, this example supports the claim by pupils at D1 that conflict occurred outside the realm of teacher supervision. In such a scenario it is understandable that the teachers would be unaware of the problem, unless a pupil informed them. In Denmark, unlike in England, pupils had little reluctance to tell teachers about their conflicts, and therefore a teacher would probably be told about a situation like the one above.

April 10, 2009 **Year 5**

There were a total of 15 pupils in this class. There was a mixture of male and female pupils, of different ethnic backgrounds. The mood of the class was quiet. Pupils had seating arrangements and the tables were mixed, with male and female pupils. Pupils were quietly chatting to one another, while the teacher was preparing the lesson. The teacher had prepared the lesson on the topic of racist bullying, to focus on repeated incidences with a specific boy. She wrote the terms "Racist Bullying" on the board and said that today's lesson would be focusing on that.

Scenario 1

One male pupil who had travelled to Africa and was a bit different to the other students [this was explained to me by his teacher after the lesson] was teased and told that he smelled by two other male pupils. They also took his notebook and ripped the pages from it. The pupil then said out loud: *"I can't do this anymore!"* and left the class. The teacher then fetched the pupil and encouraged him to express how he was feeling to the class. The pupil said that this conflict also continues after school, where the pupils sometimes wait for him and then bully him and his sisters as well.

The observation above showed that the *Kort og Godt* sessions were useful in that they enabled the pupil to share his conflict with his teacher and peers and allowed the class as a whole to try and come up with a solution. Moreover, it showed the readiness of pupils in Denmark to share their conflicts with teachers and their peers, something that was not readily observed in the English schools.

April 17, 2009 **Year 6**

There were a total of 19 pupils in this lesson, a few of whom were from ethnic minorities. Pupils had seating arrangements, with a mix of both female and male pupils at each table. The teacher came in and said that this would be a free lesson and that pupils could do whatever they wanted as long as they were quiet and remained in the classroom. The classroom was quite quaint, with small plants on the window sills. There were also various posters on the walls, such as the periodic table, mathematical formulas and a poster that had the word "hello" in different languages. Overall, it was a busy and eventful lesson, as not even five minutes into the lesson, pupils started to misbehave. As usual I was seated at the back of the class for observation. One male pupil did ask me what I was doing in their lesson, to which I replied "I am wanting to be a teacher, so I wanted to watch some teachers in their lessons to see if teaching is for me". He replied, "Oh, okay".

Scenario 1

One pupil threw a piece of paper at another pupil. The teacher saw this and took the paper. The paper read: *"fuck you"* on one side and *"you are stupid"* one the other. A female pupil had sent the note and a male pupil had replied. The teacher pulled them

both aside and yelled at them. She said that she would not tolerate calling someone mean things. She noted: *"it is not acceptable, and that is why I am not even going to waste class time on this"* and took the two pupils to the Head's office. By the time she had come back a fight had broken out in the classroom between two other pupils. She asked everyone to sit in a circle and for someone to volunteer to explain how the fight had broken out. Then one male pupil said that it was because another male pupil had called him *"stupid"* and told him that he should have been the one being sent to the Head's office. He identified the other pupil. The teacher asked them to face one another and she mediated the conflict out. It ended by them saying one nice thing about one another and shaking hands.

April 24, 2009 **Year 8**

There were a total of 17 pupils in this class. The majority were male. There was a mixed ethnic representation in the class. Pupils sat in prearranged seats. A total of four tables were scattered around the classroom. The class teacher was a young Danish woman. For the most part pupils in this class were quiet and participating in a *Kort og Godt* activity that the teacher had prepared for them. Two male pupils were consistently passing notes back and forth throughout the lesson and were trying to chat to other pupils. About halfway through the lesson, the teacher noticed some graffiti in the classroom and asked who was responsible for the graffiti, in an angry tone. Nobody volunteered so the teacher said if no one says anything then I will have to stop and search each one of you and if I find any markers on you then the consequences will be greater. The two boys who did it then raised their hands and said they were the ones responsible.

Scenario 1

Two male pupils were sent out of the classroom for making too much noise, for attempting to destroy school property (they were writing on the walls with markers), and for causing a massive disruption.

In the above instance, the teacher reacted immediately; as soon as the boys began their disturbance, the teacher responded by ushering them out of class. While there was a disruption, it could have been worse if the boys had continued to vandalize

the classroom. Once the pupils left the classroom the teacher asked the pupils to gather round and she wrote the word "vandalism" on the board and asked pupils for the meaning of the word. Then she asked them why they thought it was bad. She concluded by saying the reason why the two boys were sent to the Head's office was because they vandalized the classroom. She asked if anyone had any other questions, they said no and then she used the rest of the lesson as a 'free' lesson.

6.2.2 Classroom observations, Frederik Nielsen School (D2)

May 22, 2009 **Year 6**

There were a total of 21 pupils in the lesson. There was a mixture of ethnicities in the classroom, and a few more female pupils than male pupils. Everybody had seating arrangements and their tables consisted of a mixture of female and male pupils. The tables were organized in a horseshoe. The classroom was very spacious, bright and airy, with a pet hamster called "Jonas", for whose care the class as a whole were responsible. Pupils who had been behaving extremely well got special play time with the hamster. The teacher in this lesson was aware of an incident that had occurred between some pupils in her class during recess so she had prepared the lesson to focus on that incident.

Scenario 1

Two male pupils were slapping a girl during recess. They were caught and sent to the Head's office. The boys came back for the lesson and the teacher asked them to sit outside the classroom while the class was playing a game. The two pupils then started to make a noise, so the teacher went outside and told them to be quiet or they would be sent to the Head's office again. After about five minutes one of the boys ran into the classroom, kicked the blackboard and ran outside again. The teacher ignored him. About two minutes later, both pupils were kicking the class door. The teacher then grabbed them both and took them to the Head's office. While the teacher took these two pupils to the Head's office, two other male pupils started being rowdy (they were pushing and lightly kicking three other pupils). When the teacher returned she took the other two pupils to the Head's office, meanwhile there were three pupils lying on the floor crying because they had been pushed around.

May 29, 2009 **Year 7**

This was a small class of 15 pupils. There was almost an equal number of male and female pupils. Most of the pupils were Danish, with the exception of four non-Danish pupils. For the most part, the pupils came into the classroom and walked to their assigned seats. Overall, it was a quiet atmosphere. The pupils were softly chatting to one another in their assigned seats, until these two male (Danish) pupils walked into the classroom. Then the room got noticeably loud.

Scenario 1

As we were waiting for the class teacher to arrive at the lesson, the two male pupils who arrive in class last started to pick on another male pupil (of Pakistani decent) for being different; they were calling him a *"black pig"*, (which is a very racist term in Denmark used towards non-Danish people) and were throwing his bag back and forth between themselves. The pupil asked for them to give back his bag, but they just kept on playing with it. The teacher then walked in, while this was happening, and told the pupils to immediately stop bothering the pupil and asked them to explain themselves. One of the pupils said that they did what they did because he always smelled and it was getting to them, then they looked at one another and laughed. The other male pupil said it was because the pupil from Pakistan was weird. She then asked them to apologize to the pupil and used the lesson to talk about name-calling and its harmful effects.

The two scenarios above suggest that anti-social behaviour such as, pupils picking on and harassing other pupils were not uncommon conflicts that were witnessed in D2.

6.3 Summary of classroom observations

The classroom observations in England supported the questionnaire and interview data on the types of conflicts that pupils mentioned in their schools. The Danish observations also supported the Danish pupil responses from the questionnaires and interviews, where bullying and racism were mentioned by pupils as serious conflicts. Moreover, I have included observations where teachers have mistakenly punished the wrong pupil, in order to highlight the fact that teachers may not always be

aware of the types of conflict happening in their classrooms, or do not always know who the perpetrators are. Moreover, at time, punishment was misdirected at the wrong pupil.

My observations highlighted a significant difference in teacher responses to pupil conflicts between Denmark and England in that when teachers reacted and responded to pupil conflicts in their classrooms, the Danish teachers were more likely to work with the pupils to resolve the conflict than the English teachers. This could be attributed to the culture developed by *Klassens Time* and *Kort og Godt*.

6.4 The use of (or lack of) documentary data

Only one school (E2) out of the four case study schools provided documentation related to pupil conflict incidents. This was, however, extensive (incidence slips, chill out cards, letters and progress reports sent to and from family therapists and psychiatrists, LSU (Learning Support Unit) self-referral notes, anti-bullying, and behavioural policies). No other school provided documentation apart from anti-bullying and behaviour policies, on the basis that they did not have such extensive documentation. For instance, E1 only had a behavioural policy as they were in the process of recreating their current anti-bullying policy.

The two schools in Denmark offered only copies of an anti-bullying policy and when asked about incidence slips and self-referral slips they said that they did not have such things. The fact that three out of the four schools did not keep records of specific incidents of conflict is something that should be examined further, as the information provided by E2 proved very effective in explaining the underlying causes and types of conflicts experienced by pupils in that school, both from pupils' the teachers' perspectives. However, because only one out of the four schools gave access to such detailed documentation I was not able to include the data into this thesis, as it would make the data skewed.

6.5 Conclusion

Non-participant observation proved a useful tool in collecting data for this study. It provided the opportunity to observe the actions and behaviours of pupils in a natural and organic fashion. The opportunity to witness certain behaviours also helped to validate the questionnaire and interview responses.

In reporting classroom observations I tried to incorporate elements that would be germane to this study, i.e. to include conduct and behaviour that might be construed as conflict. While doing so, I have tried to remain objective and not insert any comments of my own that would persuade the reader to thinking that certain actions and/or behaviours should be classed as conflict. However, in trying to include certain observations, I have found it quite difficult not to be somewhat subjective. The fact that I chose to include some observations over others can suggest that I have labelled certain actions as conflict. However, to minimize bias I incorporated some recommendations made by Cohen et al., (2007). For example, I wrote down my observations as they occurred rather than to wait until the end of class, as a way to eliminate as far as possible my own subjective view of the situation.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 above I used a non-participant method to collect my observational data. When asked to join a group or sit at a table with pupils, I declined in order to remain objective and to ensure that I did not manipulate or influence the actions and behaviours of those under observation. I employed Wragg's (1994) suggestions for how to remain a non-participant observer, mainly by avoiding eye-contact and remaining in the back of the classroom, in order to provide a social divide.

Chapter 7

Comparing perceptions of and responses to conflict and policies in England & Denmark

7.0 Introduction

This chapter starts by summarising the findings reported in Chapters 5 and 6, and looks further and in greater detail at significant similarities and differences within the findings. The findings will be analysed and the analysis will refer to relevant literature where appropriate. Questionnaire and interview data relating to teacher perceptions of and responses to conflict in England and Denmark will also be discussed. This will be followed by a comparison of pupil perceptions of and responses to conflict from questionnaire and interview data. This section also examines self-harm in secondary schools/*folkeskoler*. A key point shown by the findings discussed in this chapter is that pupils in secondary schools do experience different types of conflict that are not generally identified in the literature. It further underlines the difficulty of defining conflict in secondary schools; self-harm, much like eating disorders, is often referred to as a *response* to conflict rather than conflict itself. Finally, the last section of the chapter discusses teacher and pupil perceptions of school polices.

7.1 Perceptions of conflict

7.1.1 Comparison of teacher perceptions of conflict in England and Denmark

Teacher perceptions of conflict - *Definitions of conflict*

The overall findings show that teachers' definitions of conflict were very similar across all four schools. Although various terms were used to define conflict by teachers in England and Denmark, such as name-calling, fighting and social exclusion, the term used the most by teachers across the four schools to define conflict was *disagreement.* This finding is in line with Linda Putnam's definition of conflict. Putnam (2001) defines conflict as, "expressed disagreements between people who see incompatible goals and potential inference in achieving these entailing both cooperation and competition" (p.

11). Similarly, Heidi and Guy Burgess (1997) define conflict as a shared disagreement that perpetuates over a long period that has the potential to divide parties (Burgess, 1997).

Most common pupil conflict

With regards to teacher perceptions of the most common pupil conflict at their school, teachers across all four schools agreed that verbal conflict was most prevalent. However there were differences in the types of verbal conflicts that were named. For instance, the majority of teachers in E2 said that **insults** were the most common pupil conflict in their school; this was in contrast to teachers in E1 who mainly noted **name-calling** as the most common pupil conflict in their school. Furthermore, the teacher responses in E1 and E2 contrasted with the teacher responses in D1 and D2, in that most teachers in D1 identified **disagreements** as the most common pupil conflict at their school, whereas the majority of teachers in D2 said that **arguments** were the most common form of conflict. However, the teachers did not indicate whether these responses were based on their perceptions of the types of conflicts that they witnessed or the types of conflicts that pupils told them about.

Most serious pupil conflict

There seemed to be agreement amongst teachers in E1, E2 and D1 on the most serious type of pupil conflict in their school; the majority of teachers in all three schools said **fighting** was the most serious pupil conflict. However, different teachers in D2 also considered **bullying**, **falling out** and **older pupils picking on younger pupils** as the most serious pupil conflicts in their school. It is interesting to note that only two teachers from D2 and four teachers from E2 considered bullying to be the most serious form of conflict in their schools, especially since the literature on conflict focuses on bullying as the predominant type of conflict in secondary schools. Moreover, when probed at interview, teachers in D2 said that bullying was the most serious pupil conflict in their school, based on the frequency of its occurrence. However, the majority of teachers at this school qualified the statement by saying that the level of bullying in was minimal and they felt that there was a school-specific ethos or set of policies that minimized physical altercations at their school.

The teacher responses from D2 and E2 outlined above are supported by the literature, which includes many articles that suggest that bullying is the most serious form of conflict in secondary schools, particularly in England. One such article is by Sharp & Smith (1994), who state that "in recent years bullying in schools has become an issue of public concern in the UK" (p. 13). Sharp & Smith argued that nearly 25% of secondary school students will be bullied at some point, and noted that bullying is a constant form of conflict that is not only the most common form of pupil conflict but also a serious one.

Also underlining the seriousness of bullying within the UK is the number of anti-bullying policies developed and administered. An example is the Sheffield Bullying Project (1990) which reflected the degree of concern on the part of both the UK government and the general public about bullying, and resulted in the mandatory demand for anti-bullying projects and policies within individual schools. The findings from this study however, did not support the notion that bullying is the most serious form of pupil conflict in secondary schools. It is possible; however, this could be because the level of bullying in schools has been reduced, as a result of conscientious efforts such as the Sheffield Project. Alternatively, bullying may not have been as significant a problem in England as had been believed by the media and the government.

Location of pupil conflicts

When asked where conflict most often occurred, responses varied between teachers across the four schools. In E1 responses included **the playground** and **outside**. These responses were similar to the teacher responses in E2 who also mainly said that most pupil conflicts happened **outside**. In D1 teachers said that conflicts occurred most often **in class**, whereas teachers in D2 said that conflicts occurred most often **outside of class**. These results suggest that teachers are aware of conflicts that are occurring outside of their direct supervision. Moreover, when asked at interview how they were aware of these conflicts, teachers said that sometimes students would inform them and sometimes teachers would witness something themselves while on break duty. Teachers on the whole agreed that they knew conflict occurred in the more remote areas, but that they were not able to stop all of it, as they were short of support and time. The lack of support is an issue that needs to be resolved either by the individual schools or through

the assistance of the Local Authorities. As it is currently, from the responses, it appears that teachers are aware of these conflicts but are doing nothing to stop them.

7.1.2 Comparisons of pupils perceptions of conflict in England and Denmark

Pupil perceptions of conflict - *Definitions of conflict*

Pupils in England and Denmark provided a number of different definitions of conflict in their questionnaire and interview responses. Also, conflict was perceived and defined differently amongst pupils in England and Denmark. Most English pupils defined conflict as being **physical**. This is in contrast to the majority of the Danish pupils, who defined conflict mainly as **verbal**. More specifically, more than half of the pupils in England defined conflict as "**fighting**", while most Danish pupils defined conflict as "**an argument**".

One possible explanation for the perceptual differences between verbal and physical in pupil definitions of conflict could be culture. However, whether these differences reflect school-specific culture or something broader is more difficult to specify. A Unicef report from 2007 could shed light on this difference. The report used a number of indicators, including educational, family and peer relationships, to assess children's well-being. England fared poorly, whereas Denmark ranked near the top in nearly all categories. These results suggest that country-specific factors, including culture, may account for the differences found in the above definitions of conflict. Cultural fabric, in connection with history and economics, can influence a shared set of values and beliefs held by people in a particular community.

Most common pupil conflict

The most common pupil conflict overall was **fighting** with three (E1, E2 and D1) out of four schools putting that as their number one answer. Only pupils in D2 had a different response, placing arguing ahead of fighting. At interview, pupils were asked to elaborate on what was meant by "fighting". Their responses included kicking, hitting, punching and physical violence. Bullying was also mentioned across all schools as a common pupil conflict. However, only 8.6 % of pupils overall mentioned **bullying** as the most common type of pupil conflict in their schools.

Within the individual countries the response rate for bullying was similar, with 10.0% of Danish pupils mentioning bullying and 7.5% of English pupils. These results seem too low to support the findings of Sonia Sharp (2009) who stated that one in two students experience bullying during any school term and that one in ten secondary school students are bullied more than once or twice at least in any term. Sharp (2009) also mentioned that up to 40.0 % of secondary school students feel that their teachers are unaware of bullying going on (http://www.coastkid.org/si-sob.html).

In Denmark, bullying is termed *mobning*, but it shares the same meaning as bullying in England. The original term was *mobbing*, coined by Dan Olweus (1993), but this has evolved into *mobning*, which is now associated with bullying. In fact, during interviews, pupils were asked if they understood the term *mobning*, to which they replied yes, often citing bullying as a synonym. This indicates that bullying is a cross-cultural phenomenon, regardless of how it is termed. Although a low percentage of pupils across all schools did mention bullying as one of the most common pupil conflicts in their schools, suggesting that bullying exists across cultures, the findings do not support the literature in terms of its significance.

Most serious pupil conflict

Fighting was recognized across all four schools as the most serious type of pupil conflict. Interestingly, each of the schools also acknowledged bullying to be a serious problem, albeit not as serious as fighting. The two English schools returned a higher response rate for bullying but E2 registered the highest overall pupil response rate for bullying. The fact that bullying was also perceived as being a serious conflict highlights the point that bullying does occur cross-culturally and is a problem facing schools in both England and Denmark, though not as big of an issue as the literature suggests. The finding that bullying is a problem in both England and Denmark is supported by a study conducted by Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefgoohe (2002). Smith et al. conducted a study that spanned a number of countries, aiming to establish whether bullying exists across countries of different backgrounds, socio-economic status and language. Their study concluded that bullying did occur in classrooms across all of the countries they investigated.

Location of pupil conflicts

There was agreement amongst pupils across the four schools that most pupil conflicts took place outside and in the playground. This indicates that pupils are aware that certain areas of the school are high-risk conflict zones. When asked at interview whether pupils still went to those places, knowing that conflicts occurred in them, the majority of them said yes. Furthermore, many pupils intimated that they went to those locations in order to witness or participate in the conflict. Pupils also recognised that teachers were aware that conflicts took place in those areas.

7.1.3 Comparison of teacher and pupil perceptions of conflict in England and Denmark

Overall perceptions of conflict – *Definitions*

Teachers across all four case study schools shared a common perception of conflict -**a disagreement.** Teachers in D1 and D2 offered further explanations by suggesting ineffective communication and bullying should be incorporated into the definition of conflict. In contrast, English and Danish pupils did not always share the same perceptions of conflict: for the most part English students defined conflict as **fighting**, whereas Danish students mainly defined conflict as **an argument**. The difference in perception between English and Danish students might be the result either of culture or of school-specific elements. Education has the explicit task in society to develop child cognition and schools - specifically teachers - are responsible for providing pupils with a certain environment, rendering specific action and formed experiences. Therefore, it may be said that teachers in the Danish schools created an environment that focused on verbal forms of conflict rather than physical ones. As Gibson (2004) points out, macro choices made by teachers affects micro choices made by pupils.

In their questionnaire and interview responses Danish pupils presented a perception of conflict that was similar to the perceptions of both English and Danish teachers. Danish pupils and teachers defined conflict mostly as **verbal**. One possible explanation for this consistency may be explained by applying Gibson's (2004) thoughts on perception; if teachers in the two Danish schools regularly talked about verbal conflicts with their pupils, then the pupils might think that conflict was solely

verbal. However, when asked whether pupils believed that teachers shared the same perception of pupil conflicts with them, the majority of pupils in D1said *yes* whereas most pupils in D2 said *no*.

The majority of teachers in both schools in England viewed conflict as **verbal.** They defined it as **a disagreement.** This is in contrast to most pupils in both the English schools, who defined conflict as **physical**, specifically **fighting.** Pupils and teachers in England did not perceive conflict the same way, even though they share the same cultural fabric, therefore culture could not be used as an explanation for the difference. There are a number of other possible explanations. As Naylor, Cowie, Cossin, de Bettencourt & Lemme (2006) found in their study teachers should be aware that pupils, depending on their age and gender, will probably have a less sophisticated definition of conflict than their own. For example, teachers might have a deeper understanding of conflict, in that they appreciate it as a difference of opinion, power or status, which may or may not lead to physical altercations.

Another possible explanation could be that some pupils do not view disagreements, in their most basic sense - a difference of opinion- to be significant enough to be considered a conflict. Instead, they may choose the most extreme form of disagreement, physical confrontation, to use as the basis for their definitions of conflict. Moreover, it could be the case that teachers in the two English schools defined conflicts mainly as disagreements and pupils mainly as fighting because, as people get older and turn into adults, they engage less in physical altercations and more in disagreements. Therefore their responses could be reflecting their perceptions of age appropriate responses. Moreover, the repetitive nature of these experiences can mould one's perceptions and ultimately affect the way in which one views their environment (Gregory, 1970).

Considering the difference in perceptions of conflict amongst English pupils and teachers, it was interesting to note that when asked whether pupils and teachers shared the same notions of pupil conflicts, the majority of teachers in both English schools said no, along with majority of pupils in E2. However, the majority of pupils in pupils in E1 did feel that teachers and pupils shared similar notions of pupil conflicts. This result suggests that teachers and pupils perceive conflict in different ways. On its own, this

result is concerning as it highlights the chasm between pupils' and teachers' perceptions of conflict. However, further compounding this result is the fact that when queried, teachers confirmed that they did not share the same views on conflict as pupils.

The most common pupil conflict

In general, teachers viewed the most common pupil conflict at their schools to be verbal in nature, with arguing and name-calling being mentioned the most. In contrast, pupils in both countries viewed fighting to be the most common, bar pupils in D2, who echoed the teachers' sentiments. The fact that pupils in D2 responded differently to the pupils in schools D1, E1 and E2 on several of the questions suggests that there is something specific about the environment in D2 that affects pupil perceptions of conflict. Observations made at D1 and D2 did not identify the reason for this, as curriculum, teaching and classroom sizes were similar.

The fact that pupils in three out of the four schools mentioned fighting as the most common conflict in their schools, while none of the teachers did, was noteworthy. This finding highlights a discrepancy between pupils' and teachers' perceptions. Many studies researching pupil/teacher relationships support the notion that pupils and teachers often have different views on a number of issues (Hamre et al., 2007). This is a particularly significant finding for this study, as it could imply that teachers may either be unaware of the amount of pupil fighting that occurs or may be simply ignoring it. However, it may also indicate that there are not enough teachers patrolling the grounds in schools in an attempt to deter conflict. In fact, teachers often admitted in interview to being short-staffed and offered this as an explanation as to why they were unaware of the amount of fighting that was taking place in their schools.

Moreover, it is likely that teachers perceived the most common form of conflict as **verbal** because they spend most of their time in the classrooms teaching, and thus verbal conflict may be the main type of conflict they witness. Their responses might have indicated, therefore, the type of conflict teachers most often witnessed first-hand (Gregory, 1970). It is likely that pupil fighting would occur outside the classroom in unsupervised areas. In fact, pupil responses to the question, "where does most conflict occur?" supported this, as the majority of responses mentioned areas outside of teacher supervision. It could also be the case that pupils who were involved in or witnessed a

fight did not go to the teachers with that information. Since pupils reported most fighting took place outside the classrooms and lessons, unless teachers visited those areas where the fighting took place or were informed of the incidents by pupils, then they would consequently show lack of awareness of such conflicts.

In the responses section of this chapter, students offered a number of reasons why they did not inform teachers of fights or physical altercations. For example, those involved in the melees often felt that getting teachers involved would worsen the situation, as they were concerned that they would be viewed as snitches if they said anything. Instead, pupils confided in others, including their friends and family.

The most serious pupil conflict

When asked about the most serious pupil conflicts in their schools, there was a general consensus amongst respondents. In three out of the four schools (E1, E2 & D1), both teachers and pupils cited **fighting** as the most serious form of conflict in their school. The exception was teachers in D2, who said that **bullying** was the most serious pupil conflict in their school. Notwithstanding the responses of teachers in D2, the results to this question show uniformity in response patterns; it indicates that across cultures fighting was viewed as a serious form of pupil conflict.

Location of pupil conflicts

Teachers and pupils in Denmark seemed to share similar perceptions when it came to the location of pupil conflicts, in that the playground and classrooms were mentioned the most. Interestingly, teachers and pupils in England also seemed to share similar notions in that they believed that most pupil conflicts happened either in the playground or outside of the classroom. This response pattern was predictable, as it is logical for pupil conflicts to occur away from direct teacher supervision. However, as indicated by the interview results, pupils were not deterred from engaging in conflict within certain areas even though the likelihood of being caught was high.

7.2 Reponses to conflict

7.2.1 Comparison of teacher responses to conflict in England and Denmark

When asked about their views on how pupils resolve or manage their conflicts there were some variations in the teacher responses across the four schools. The majority of teachers in E1 believed that pupils resolved or managed their conflicts by **talking about them** with others. The same teachers reiterated at interview that they thought their students were able to **constructively resolve/manage their conflicts**. Teachers in E1 also mentioned fighting, apologizing, anger management, and arguing as ways that pupils in their school resolved/managed their conflicts. Meanwhile, teachers in E2 believed that pupils solved/managed their conflicts mainly by using the pastoral system or by getting teachers involved. Teachers in E2 also said that pupils in their school managed their conflicts by telling someone, fighting, arguing, using threats, confrontation and avoidance.

There was therefore a marked difference between the teachers' responses to pupil conflicts in E1 and E2, in that teachers in E2 believed that more pupils used the school's pastoral system as the main way of diffusing conflict. This finding suggested that teachers in E2 were confident both that their schools offered such programmes, and that pupils used them readily. In fact, E2 did have some very creative and innovative protocols for helping pupils manage their conflicts, including Therapeutic Circle Time (for year 7 only), an SU (Support Unit) where pupils who were having conflicts or behavioural problems would either be sent or ask to go to. School E2 also offered anger management support, had a police officer patrolling the outdoor premises about once a week, CCTV cameras in the pupils' toilets, a counselling unit with several counsellors on site every day, and had run several anti-bullying campaigns. Thus, E2 seemed to have what Raney (2009), refers to as a successful comprehensive conflict management approach for reducing and managing conflict in schools.

Teachers from the first Danish case study school, D1, felt that pupils resolved or managed their problems mainly by getting teachers, parents and/or other adults involved. Other responses included: avoiding the conflict, getting help from other pupils and that the pupils solved conflict themselves. Most teachers in D2 said that pupils in their school would reduce or manage their conflicts mainly by informing their class

teachers. Other responses given were: using mediators, arguing, fighting or turning to their peers for support. The high level of involvement of teachers in reducing or managing conflict in the Danish *folkeskole* can be partly attributed to the fact that most pupils have the same class teacher for the duration of their education. This extended relationship helps to build trust and familiarity between pupils and their class teachers, making it easier for pupils to include teachers in the management of their conflicts and day-to-day lives. In contrast, teachers in England do not teach the same students for extended periods of time. While there are cases where pupils have the same tutors for several years, these are not as universal as in the Danish class teacher system.

There seemed to be agreement amongst most teachers in E1 and E2 that *everyone* was responsible for managing pupil conflicts at school, suggesting a sharing of responsibility. This view is supported by Raney (2009), who argues that for conflict policies to be successful, they must be comprehensive and progressive, in that it is the responsibility of all to ensure the proper development and application of conflict management policies. It appears that the English schools accept this and therefore attempt to create an environment whereby everyone is encouraged to deal with conflict. The term *everyone*, included all members of staff, including the non-teaching staff and management. This broad spectrum even extends to parents, who are often viewed as being outside the educational system. This approach underlines the holistic view of teachers in E1 and E2 in their approach to resolving or managing pupil conflict in their schools.

Teachers in D1 felt that it was their responsibility to manage or resolve pupil conflicts in their school. In D2, teachers said that it was the responsibility of the school management - which, as in England, includes the senior teachers, the Heads and deputy heads - to manage or resolve pupil conflicts. The second most frequent response was *teachers*. From these responses it appears that teachers in Denmark are more willing to see themselves as an important part of the process in reducing or eliminating pupil conflict in their schools. The English teachers' responses seemed more inclusive, believing that solving pupil conflicts is a whole school approach. This belief could be attributed to the English tradition of pastoral care, which has always stressed that it is the responsibility of *all* teachers to promote pupil well-being.

The teacher responses in D1 and D2 were likely to result from the structure of the Danish educational system where class teachers spend several years (sometimes all of *folkeskole*) with the same students, thereby taking on several responsibilities, including that of pastoral carer. In addition to the school system being a main factor influencing teacher beliefs, the cultural fabric also seemed to play a part in the differences between teachers' responses between the two countries. For instance, Scandinavian countries have a pronounced view of citizenship, which is evident in their education, health and social policies (Unicef Innocenti Report Card 7, 2007). Therefore, as a result of the ethos created by Danish culture, teachers may view it as their responsibility to resolve or manage pupil conflict.

The majority of teachers in Denmark believed that the staff in their schools were doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts. In fact, all teachers in D2 believed that staff were doing enough. When asked to elaborate on their responses at interview, teachers said that all staff members worked together in conjunction with the school policy to provide pupils with the means of diffusing conflict. This is a school-specific example of how a conscientious team effort can benefit pupils (Camodeca et al., 2003). On the other hand, a fair number of teachers in the English schools, particularly E1, felt that the staff in their school were not doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts. For instance one teacher stated that they felt that the staff were not doing enough because they could always do more, while another teacher said that there was no agreed ethos and commitment to reducing pupil conflicts.

7.2.2 Comparison of pupil responses to conflict in England and Denmark

Pupils were asked how they thought most conflicts could be resolved and their responses yielded consistent responses across all schools, with the majority of pupils saying that most conflicts can be resolved by **talking about them** or by **telling someone**. However, when asked how they responded when they fell out with someone and when someone fell out with them, pupils in England said that they would respond by **avoiding** them in both instances, while the Danish pupils said - in both instances - that they would respond by **trying to talk about the problem or solving the problem**. The Danish pupil responses to how they would respond if they had fallen out with

someone, or if someone had fallen out with them, were consistent with their responses to the question that most conflicts could be resolved by **talking about them**. Conversely, there was a discrepancy between the English pupils' responses to how they felt that most conflicts could be resolved and how they actually resolved their own conflicts. They said that most conflicts could be resolved by talking about them or telling someone, yet they said they would avoid people they had fallen out with, or who had fallen out with them.

A significant difference was also found between how Danish and English pupils perceived that pupils at their schools settle their conflicts. While the English pupils said that they believed that pupils in their school settled their conflicts by **fighting**, Danish pupils believed pupils in their schools settled their conflicts by **arguing**. These responses suggest that the Danish pupils take a less physical approach to managing their conflicts, while the English pupils tend to take a more physical approach to managing or resolving their conflicts. One possible explanation as to why the English pupils would apply these less socially desirable tactics can be drawn from the literature (Feldman & Gowen, 1998; Björkqvist et al., 1992; Lindeman et al., 1997). According to these researchers *overt anger, avoidance,* distraction, and withdrawal, are thought to be used by adolescents more frequently than by young adults. They state that this may be due to decreased self-control, increased peer influence, and an increased concern with the opposite sex associated with this stage of development.

Similarly, a study by Larsen et al. (2001) comparing conflict management techniques in adolescents (ages 11-18) and young adults (ages 19-25), found that adolescents used disengagement most and negotiation least to deal with conflict. Feldman & Gowen (1998) and Larsen et al. (2001) argue that age and level of maturity play a role in how pupils respond to conflicts. This could explain why most pupils in the two English schools said that they responded to conflicts mainly by fighting or avoiding other pupils.

The type of relationships with the pupils involved in the conflicts and whether or not the conflicts were hypothetical or real are two other factors which may explain why the English pupils responded to conflicts by avoiding and fighting. According to Larsen et al. (2001) relationships between romantic partners and friends are more conducive to

negotiation tactics, while coercion is used more for sibling and acquaintance relationships. Larsen et al. (2001) also found that negotiation was preferred in hypothetical conflict scenarios, while coercion was used more in actual conflicts. This does not explain however why the Danish pupils, who were roughly the same age as the English pupils, did not respond with disengagement. Thus a possible explanation for the differences in responses to conflict amongst English and Danish pupils can be attributed to cultural and school-specific factors.

A significant difference was found between the Danish and English educational systems which could also explain why pupils in England take such an aggressive approach to conflict while the Danish pupils have a more peaceful approach. For instance, *Kort og Godt* was used as a preventative method in both D1 and D2 to educate pupils about conflict, to make them aware of their environment, while also helping them resolve any conflicts that they might have been experiencing during a lesson or while at school. These techniques were reinforced through *Klassens Time*, sessions held once a week specifically to address, deal with, and prevent potential conflicts. However, the two English case study schools did not have anything like *Kort og Godt* or *Klassens Time*. In England conflict management is taught through the curriculum in PSHE sessions.

In terms of conflict management, pupils across all four schools agreed that it was the responsibility of teachers to manage pupil conflict in their schools. This is an interesting perspective in that it places the responsibility squarely on the teachers. This finding is all the more significant when it is coupled with the responses to the question of whether pupils thought teachers were doing enough to manage their conflicts. For the most part pupils in both English schools said that teachers were not doing enough. This was in contrast to the Danish pupils, who felt that teachers were doing enough to manage pupil conflicts. Based on these findings, it could be argued that teachers in E1 and E2 could do more to resolve or manage pupil conflicts at their schools, particularly as pupils in England perceive it to be the teachers' responsibility to manage pupil conflicts.

There are a number of school-specific and cultural factors that may account for the Danish pupils' saying that they felt that teachers in their schools were doing enough

to reduce or manage pupil conflicts, while the English pupils said they did not feel that teachers in their schools were doing enough. For instance, in the 'class-teacher system' in Denmark (explained in detail below) pupils spend up to five years with the same class teacher and therefore have a chance to forge strong bonds with them. In turn, teachers in Denmark get a chance to know their pupils more intimately and as such, learn how to work more effectively with them. This class teacher system could be one explanation why pupils in Denmark felt that their teachers were doing enough to reduce or manage their conflicts. It is an intriguing thought, worthy of further investigation, whether this type of system, with its continuity of teacher-class relationship would have similar impact in English secondary schools.

Finally, when asked who they would talk to if they had a problem at school, there seemed to be a consensus amongst pupils across all four schools that they would talk to their friends. Family was mentioned as a second choice across all schools, indicating that pupils in both countries agreed that they would mainly talk to their friends and then to their family if they had a problem at school. This finding is interesting, given that pupils across both countries viewed it as the responsibility of teachers to manage their conflicts; while teachers had this perceived responsibility, pupils were not ready to turn to them for guidance. This is more understandable for English pupils, as they generally agreed that teachers were not doing enough to manage their conflicts. However, it is more surprising that Danish pupils did not turn to their teachers. Perhaps pupils in Denmark, like those in England, felt more comfortable speaking to their peers rather than adults.

7.2.3 Comparison of teacher and pupil responses to conflict in England and Denmark

Questionnaire and interview responses indicated that teachers' and pupils' responses to pupil conflicts were, for the most part, different. However, on the whole, teachers and pupils worked together to develop and administer constructive methods of dealing with pupil conflict.

One of the more intriguing findings relates to the responses given by the teachers in the English case study schools as to how pupil conflicts could be managed.

Teachers in the two English schools perceived that **telling someone, particularly an adult**, was how most pupils in their schools managed their conflicts. However, most pupils in E1 and E2 said that they managed their conflicts by **fighting**. There is a discrepancy between the teacher and pupil perceptions of how pupils managed their conflicts. It is possible that teachers in E1 and E2 did not notice the frequency of fighting taking place in their schools. This notion is supported by teachers' and pupils' responses to the question, *"what is the most common form of pupil conflict in your school?"* to which both teachers and pupils replied, **verbal disagreements**, except for pupils in E1 and E2 who said **fighting**. The difference between teacher and pupil perceptions in England is further compounded when compared to the Danish teacher and pupil responses, where there was agreement that pupils would manage their conflicts by **telling someone** or **getting adults involved**.

As stated earlier, another interesting finding derived from teachers in England who said that **everyone** in the school was responsible for managing or resolving pupil conflicts. The response 'everyone' included teachers, parents, management, pupils and both teaching and non-teaching staff. However, pupils in England did not recognise this. They believed that it was the responsibility of **teachers** to manage or resolve pupil conflicts. Thus there was disagreement amongst pupils and teachers in the two English schools, in that while pupils felt that teachers were responsible for managing their conflicts, the teachers believed that **everyone** involved in the conflicts was responsible for managing the conflicts. This was again in contrast with the responses from the Danish pupils and teachers who seemed to agree that it was the responsibility of the **teachers** to manage or resolve pupil conflicts in their schools.

It is worth noting that teachers in Denmark placed the onus upon themselves to manage or resolve pupil conflicts, while their English counterparts spread the responsibility more broadly. Again, one possible explanation for the difference in teacher perceptions cross-culturally could be due to teachers in Denmark also assuming a pastoral role as well as a teaching role. Moreover, the Danish secondary school system employs the "class teacher system" in grades one through to grade ten, where the class teacher will usually stay with the same class for several years. In fact 16% of the class teachers stay with the same class at least five years and 70% of all teachers in Denmark are class teachers, meaning that majority of teachers in the Danish educational systems

will stay with the same class and the same pupils for several years (Florander & Skov, 1985).

In addition a class teacher in Denmark also takes on a pastoral role, where they deal with both the educational and social problems arising in the class. Hence, one possible explanation for why teachers in Denmark felt that they were responsible for managing pupil conflicts in their schools could be because they spend a lot of time with the pupils throughout their schooling and because they take on a pastoral role (Florander & Skov, 1985). They may also see themselves as being mainly responsible for managing pupil conflicts in their schools because they are involved in facilitating *Klassens Time* (focusing on conflict prevention and management) once a week.

The English educational system, on the other hand, does not use a class-teacher system like the Danish one; as a result teachers in England do not spend the same amount of time with their pupils as the Danish teachers do. Moreover, most schools in England, if not all, have a pastoral care unit where a team of people is responsible for the emotional and mental health of pupils, as opposed to Denmark where the class teachers take on the role of pastoral carer as well. This could be one possible explanation for why the majority of English teachers in E1 and E2 felt that everyone at school was responsible for managing pupil conflicts, as opposed to just teachers. What makes the above finding more intriguing is that many teachers in England believed that they were doing enough to manage or resolve pupil conflicts in their schools; most pupils in E1 and E2, though, disagreed. In Denmark, however, majority of both teachers and pupils agreed that teachers and other staff were doing everything possible to resolve pupil conflicts.

7.3 Self-harm

7.3.1 Comparison of teacher perceptions of self-harm in England and Denmark

Another question the current study sought to answer was whether pupils self-harmed and whether teachers considered this to be a problem in their schools. As Ron Best (2006) states, the prevalence of self-harm is difficult to determine because it is by nature often a solitary and secretive act. However, Best (2006) goes on to argue that self-harm is an increasing problem faced by schools and therefore merits closer

attention. Moreover, Deliberate Self-Harm (DSH) was included in this research as it is an interesting concept from the point of view of a conflict study, in that it is widely debated whether self-harm is a conflict in itself or a response to it.

According to Best (2006), DSH may be understood in terms of object relations where the body being injured is seen as 'standing-in' for significant people (often the mother), and the harming behaviour as an acting-out of emotions derived from inadequate attachments or uncertain feelings towards significant others in early childhood. From such a perspective, Gardner (2001) proposes that DSH in the form of cutting is a response to an 'irreconcilable psychic conflict' which she associates with a feeling of being held captive by a significant relationship, yet fearful of the freedom or lack of attachment which would follow breaking free from it.

Alternatively, Turp (2003), Strong (2000) and Spandler & Batsleer (2000), argue that DSH may be explained from a phenomenological perspective, without subscribing to the models of the psyche offered by psychoanalysis. Here, the purpose of the therapist is not so much to analyse as to *empathise*, seeking to understand something of the subjective experience of the client through his or her eyes. Best (2006) states that from such perspectives, DSH may be seen as a self-inflicted punishment to the body after experiencing some trauma (e.g. in the aftermath of sexual abuse); as a release of filth or evil which, at some level of consciousness, the person feels is within them; or to provide oneself a semblance of attention, that is not being provided by others, when tending to the wounds. From this perspective, it would be fair to state that self-harm is a response to conflict, rather than a conflict in itself. However, from the view presented by Gardner (2001), self-harm is itself a conflict that is penetrated in the mind.

In an attempt to help clarify the position on self-harm, teachers and pupils were asked various questions to examine whether they had particular views that could contribute to the debate of whether self-harm is itself a conflict or a response to it. In seeking the teachers' responses, they were asked "is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?" Cross culturally, it was found that more English teachers than Danish teachers viewed self-harm as a pupil problem. In addition to perceptual differences between teacher responses to pupil self-harm, the findings also show differences within the individual cultures. For instance in England, almost a third as

many teachers in E2 did not see self-harm as a problem, compared to in E1. Within the Danish schools, a number of teachers in D1 recognised self-harm to be a pupil problem, while no teachers did in D2. Thus, most of the teachers in this study contended that self-harm was a pupil problem in their schools, bar teachers in D2.

The teachers who did report self-harm to be a pupil problem could have done so because they could have been dealing with specific pupils who self-harmed on a regular basis. However, the fact that no teachers in D2 said self-harm was a pupil problem in their school is noteworthy, as this suggests that none of the teachers seemed to be aware that some pupils in their school were actually self-harming. Another significant finding is that although some teachers in the English schools did recognize self-harm as a pupil problem in their schools, majority were not sure. This lack of certainty is itself significant, as it indicates either that teachers are not involved enough to be aware of pupil self-harm in their school, or that they do not know what self-harm is. However, when asked to define self-harm in their interviews, all teachers who responded showed considerable awareness of the term, which makes the former case a possibility.

In a study conducted in 2006, Best postulated that the awareness of teachers with respect to DSH was dependent on a number of factors; his respondents reported that different categories of staff had different levels of awareness, and attributed some variation to the personal experiences of individuals. One teacher considered that her colleagues would either not know about it or not think about it "unless they've been in a position where a child has come up to them. I mean, it isn't one of those things that's particularly flagged up." (p. 165). One of Best's (2006) conclusions was that teachers with pastoral roles and/or with a counselling background were thought likely to be more aware than others of DSH occurring in their schools.

Furthermore, the teacher responses in England reported in the current study did not appear to be consistent with the findings of Dr Tanya Byron (2008). She mentions that the rates of self-harm in the UK are estimated to be the highest in Europe at 4/1000 people, meaning that approximately three teenagers will injure themselves every hour.

Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?						
		Hans Christian Andersen	**Frederik Nielsen**	**Charles Dickens**	**Edward Elgar**	Total
Yes	Count	2	0	4	3	9
	%	40.0%	.0%	28.6%	33.3%	27.3%
No	Count	2	5	6	1	14
	%	40.0%	100.0%	42.9%	11.1%	42.4%
Not sure	Count	1	0	4	5	10
	%	20.0%	0%	28.6%	55.6%	30.3%
Total	Count	5	5	14	9	33
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Total missing, N=1

7.3.2 Comparison of pupils perceptions of self-harm in England and Denmark

The pupils were asked “have you ever self-harmed?”. Overall, a significant number of pupils said that they had self-harmed. However, upon closer examination of the individual cases, it was found that twice as many Danish pupils reported self-harming as English pupils; an interesting result, given the more physically-focused forms of conflict occur between pupils in the English schools. Also, none of the Danish pupils gave a **not sure** response to having self-harmed. This was not true for the English pupils, as quite a few said that they were **unsure.** The fact that so many of the English pupils said that they were not sure if they had self-harmed is noteworthy; it is possible that some pupils did not known what the term “self-harming” meant, in which case they could have self-harmed but not been able to put a name to their actions. This was evident in a pupil response taken from the questionnaires, where one pupil said that he did self-harm, but when asked what self-harm meant he said slipping on a wet floor.

When the responses were examined within the individual cases for comparison it was found that within the schools in England there was a significant difference in response rates amongst pupils; a significantly higher number of pupils in E2 said that they had self-harmed in comparison to pupils in E1. There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy. The actual number of pupils that self-harm in E1 may indeed be lower, or pupils in E1 may have had trouble understanding the meaning of “self-harm”. Yet another explanation could be that pupils in E2 were more honest in their responses. Other potential factors not related to the administration of the questionnaires could include: better school-related support programmes in E1; a school

culture that discourages self-harming; a bullying culture in E2 that results in pupils who are being victimized acting against themselves (an example of self-harm being a response to conflict).

Conversely, participants in the two schools in Denmark showed a more similar response rate and within each school, a number of pupils did say that they had self-harmed. In fact, more pupils in Denmark said that they had self-harmed than pupils in England. The relatively high response rate may be attributed to pupils in Denmark having a better understanding of the concept of self-harm, or of the questions in the questionnaires/interviews relating to self-harm, or indeed that more self-harming goes on amongst the pupils in Denmark.

Nonetheless, the response rate for self-harming was intriguing when compared to the level of physical harm being undertaken between pupils in D1 and D2. Responses to the question, "what is the most common form of conflict in your schools?" indicated verbal conflict, mainly arguing, was more common in D2 and fighting was more common in D1. Yet the statistics showed self-harm to be more common than arguing in D2. When probed further, some pupils stated that they self-harmed due to family problems suggesting that they used self-harm as a means of coping with the emotional or physical strains they were experiencing at home. Other pupils, however, stated that they had no particular reason - such as a reaction to being bullied at school - for self-harming. These pupils seemed to be bothered by some internal traumas that drove them to self-harm.

Self-harm is serious and can cause great damage and even lead to death if not detected and dealt with accordingly. The percentage rate for pupils reporting self-harm in this study (see tables below) suggests that self-harm is a significant pupil problem in both English and Danish schools. , Moreover, the data supports Best's (2006) finding that sometimes teachers' awareness of pupil self-harm is patchy. The following tables summarise the data on this aspect of the research, first by country and secondly by case study school.

Have you ever self-harmed?				
		England	**Denmark**	Total
Yes	Count	12	17	29
	%	6.2%	11.6%	8.5%
No	Count	155	130	285
	%	80.3%	88.4%	83.8%
Not sure	Count	26	0	26
	%	13.5%	0%	7.6%
Total	Count	193	147	340
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Have you ever self-harmed?						
		Hans Christian Andersen	**Frederik Nielsen**	**Charles Dickens**	**Edward Elgar**	Total
Yes	Count	7	10	11	1	29
	%	8.9%	14.7%	10.5%	1.1%	8.5%
No	Count	72	58	83	72	285
	%	91.1%	85.3%	79.0%	81.8%	83.8%
Not sure	Count	0	0	11	15	26
	%	0%	0%	10.5%	17.0%	7.6%
Total	Count	79	68	105	88	340
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Total missing, N=7

Anger was the main reason that pupils gave for self-harming. This further supports the notion that pupils viewed self-harm as a conflict itself and not a response to conflict. This is because anger is a state of mind. It is true that the feeling of anger is developed from some form of stimulus, most often external; as Freud (1929) suggested; when one stimulus is removed and another introduced, this clash causes a state of internal turmoil, which can lead to anger, depression and melancholy. However, the reasons pupils gave for self-harming within the individual schools differed. For instance, in E2 a major reason given for self-harm by pupils was stress/coping, often related to life at home. One response that was particularly concerning was from a 15 year old female pupil in E2, who said,

"I'm an individual that is very mature. My parents treat me like an adult when they should treat me like a teenager. They secure themselves because they know that I am very responsible and have the knowledge of a 38 year old. So I cut my hands with a razor so that they can get the point that I'm still a kid and they should treat me like one and that I can do the crazy things that other teens do as well."

Bullying and being depressed were also mentioned as reasons why pupils self-harmed in E2. A concerning response came from two pupils in D2 who mentioned that they self-harmed because they were bored. This is concerning as it shows that some pupils are harming themselves because they have nothing else to do with their time. If they are doing it at school it could mean that they are doing it as a result of not having anything better to do. Maybe they are too advanced in a class and find it boring. Either way it indicates that teachers have not picked up on this.

Pupils in the Danish schools gave different reasons from the English pupils as to why they self-harmed. For instance, one pupil in D1 said that they self-harmed because things had been rough, while three pupils in D2 said that they self-harmed because they were sad or angry.

Pupils were also asked to define self-harm to see if they were answering the question on self-harm correctly. Most pupils did seem aware of the meaning of self-harm, apart from one pupil in E2, who defined his instance of self-harm as:
"I slep [slipped] on a wet floor went I was runnins [running]."

Apart from this one exception, all pupils seemed to know what self-harm was. This was important to establish as it was vital in finding out whether pupils were aware of the meaning, especially in the case of those who admitted to doing it.

The above discussion has highlighted the frequency of self-harm in the four schools studied in this research. It further provided possible explanations - from the pupils themselves - for why they self-harmed. It also tried to clarify the debate as to whether self-harm is a conflict itself or a response to conflict. While I do not make any claims to have provided evidence to support one side or the other, I believe I have provided potential arguments for both sides, while highlighting the seriousness of the topic.

7.4 General overview of school policies

The reason for asking pupils and teachers about their awareness of school polices, and whether they felt that they had a say in those policies, was because research

has suggested that the participation of young people in school decision making can itself help to reduce the levels of aggression and violence in schools (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Osler & Starkey (2005), state that "negative school cultures denying student participation breed resentment and violence" (p. 198). Although the current study did not attempt to establish whether lack of pupil participation in school decision making bred resentment and violence, it did investigate whether pupils had a voice in relation to policies concerning them.

7.4.1 Overview of school policies in England

In England, central government - the Department for Education - has powers and responsibility for the overall provision of the education service, for determining national policies and for planning the direction of the system as a whole. The management and administration of education at local level encompasses the responsibilities of the local authorities (LAs) in England. Local authorities and individual institutions implement and administer policies and also have their own statutory powers and responsibilities. The education system is characterized by its decentralized nature. Responsibility for different aspects of the service is shared between the central government, local government, churches and other voluntary bodies, the governing bodies of educational institutions and the teaching profession (Sharp & Smith, 1994).

One of the core interventions made mandatory by central government and entrusted to the LAs to administer, was making it mandatory for all schools to implement a whole school policy on bullying. The aim of the 'anti-bullying' policy was to integrate policy with existing policies and behaviour and discipline, equal opportunities and pastoral care (Sharp & Smith, 1994). The development of anti-bullying policies is one of the few consistent policies shared by schools in England. The more common theme is for individual schools to create school-specific protocols or policies to deal with issues specific to the school and the neighbourhood.

What is also interesting in relation to this study is that one of the requirements for creating a nationwide anti-bullying policy was that it should be developed through an extensive and thorough process of consultation which involves staff (including non-teaching staff), parents, governors and pupils (Sharp & Smith, 1994). Yet this research

highlighted the point that the majority of pupils in the two English schools did not feel that they had a say in the anti-bullying policies in their schools, despite requirements made by the central government to include pupils in the creation of an anti-bullying school policy that dealt with issues specific to their school and neighbourhood. Thus, the pupil responses from E1 and E2 raise the question of whether pupils are actually actively included and involved in the creation of these policies.

7.4.2 Overview of school policies in Denmark

In Denmark, as in England, the general aims of education, the guidelines for curricula and the teaching guides are set by the Ministry of Education. However the two countries have different ways of implementing their guidelines. Although both countries have decentralized education systems, the Danish system involves more areas of decision making that are free of the central government. For instance, the local authorities in Denmark have decisive power at the local level, giving each school the responsibility for its own development such as formulating aims, developing plans and evaluating procedures to create their own policy. These policies reflect local demands and wishes, which have to be within the legal educational framework (Holst, 1997).

Irrespective of the fact that local schools are responsible for the administration of curricula, there is a great emphasis in Denmark on making schools democratic. In order to achieve this, schools in Denmark have incorporated some specific programmes into their curriculum. One of such measure, referred to earlier, is *Klassens Time* (The Class Hour). *Klassens Time* is a lesson allotted to teachers once a week as a preventative measure to deal with pupil conflicts. The two measures most often applied in *Klassens Time* identified during this research were *Klassemodet* (The Class Meeting) and *Kort og Godt* (Card and Good).

In *Klassemodet*, a recently introduced measure, the pupils sit in a circle every week on a certain day to talk about the conflicts that have taken place during that week. Teachers and pupils work together to examine the ways in which the students handled their conflicts. If no conflicts occurred that week, then the class meeting is used to discuss hypothetical situations and the ways in which the pupils might respond. The time and number of meetings is decided by the teacher, but the general principle is that

at least once a week the pupils select the topic of discussion. The teacher acts as a guide and once one situation is dealt with, they will go on to the next. They will ask questions like, how did you deal with it? What could you have done better? The teachers are not allowed to shout at the pupils or to take an authoritarian role. Rather they take a mediatory role. A solution is sought within the class.

Kort og Godt is another preventative measure used to prevent and deal with pupil conflicts. Similarly to *Klassemodet*, pupils are seated in a circle where they take a card from a pile of cards labelled negative and positive. The positive card will read for instance "I really like this friend", and then the pupil will give that card to a friend that they really like and then they have to explain why they like that friend. The teacher will go on to explain to both pupils that the card chosen was a 'good' card and why it is considered to be good. There are also negative cards that for example read, "I don't really like him/her." In this case, the pupil will pass the card to someone they don't like and they have to explain why they don't like them, they have to give a reason for each card and then they try to solve any problems that they might have there and then. *Kort og Godt* is aimed at making sure that pupils understand the difference between positive and negative thoughts and actions and that they develop those thoughts and actions constructively before they turn into conflicts.

7.4.3 Comparison of teacher awareness of school policies in England and Denmark

Due to differences in educational systems, school policies varied between English and Danish schools. However, most teachers in both countries showed great awareness of school policies dealing with conflict. In England the policies that were mentioned in both schools were: a behavioural policy, equality policy (including homophobic, racial and sexual elements) and an anti-bullying policy. Other responses included a general ethos in the school that we do not want conflict (E1), and there is no one specific policy that deals with conflict (E2). Apart from also having anti-bullying policies in Denmark, teachers in Denmark also mentioned *Kort og Godt*, *Klassemodet*, *familie klasser* (family classes), and pupil mediators. All four schools had an anti-bullying policy.

The majority of teachers agreed that their schools implemented the policies mentioned. This not only shows an awareness of school policies, but also implies that teachers understood the application of the policies and their aims. Moreover, due to teachers' great awareness of almost all school policies and measures for dealing with pupil conflicts, it is inferred that the school management is informing their teachers about school policies regarding conflict. This is a good sign as it implies that teachers are getting the requisite knowledge regarding the policies and measures in place, and that they are being informed about their application. Hopefully teachers are applying these policies and measures accordingly; awareness of such policies does not guarantee their implementation.

When asked if they felt that pupils had a say in the development of conflict management policies in their schools, teacher responses varied across all schools. The overall responses, however, suggested that teachers believed their pupils to have some sort of input into the development and application of conflict management policies. Some teachers were even able to offer specific examples of how pupils in their school had spearheaded the development of a new conflict management technique. In his 1993 study, Webster concluded that it was the lack of pupil involvement in the development of conflict management policies that rendered them futile. Similarly, Raney (2009), in support of Webster's comments, states that successful conflict management policies evolve out of a school-wide effort to change the ethos and policies of disaffected schools.

When further asked if they found these policies to be helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts, there was strong agreement amongst teachers with regards to the effectiveness of these policies. Teachers in England noted the marked reduction in bullying as a sign of the usefulness of anti-bullying policies. In Denmark, teachers highlighted the low level of fighting as a positive sign. However, across all four schools teachers were conscious of the fact that not all instances of conflict could be avoided or even properly managed, and often blamed this on the school policies.

7.4.4 Comparison of pupil awareness of school policies in England and Denmark

When asked if their school had any policies that dealt with conflict, most pupils said yes. The policies mentioned differed between pupils in the English and Danish schools. Overall, the pupils in both countries and across all four schools were aware of the conflict management policies in their schools. The pupil responses in England and Denmark included: internal exclusions, day-to-day exclusions, anti-bullying policy/anti-bullying campaign, behavioural policy and detentions. However, there were a number of pupils who did not know whether their schools offered such policies, particularly in D2. This lack of knowledge regarding school policy can suggest (especially in Denmark) that measures like *Klassemodet* and *Kort og Godt* are so integrated in the teaching curriculum that they are not considered to be separate policies, which could explain why some pupils said that they did not know whether their schools had any policies that dealt with conflict. Again, a possible explanation for this similarity in perceptions between Danish teachers and pupils with regards to pupil involvement in school policy can be due to *Klassens Time*. The fact that this lesson is specially set for pupils to discuss and solve their conflicts, coupled with pupils' awareness of the purpose of this class and their active involvement in resolving actual and potential conflicts during that class, could account for this similarity in perceptions between Danish teachers and pupils.

With regards to having a say in the anti-bullying policies of their schools, the great majority of pupils in all four schools said that they did not feel that they had a say in these policies. This result directly contradicts the English teacher responses, where majority of teachers in both E1 and E2 said that pupils in their schools did have a say in the anti-bullying policies. This difference underlines a perceptual divide between pupil and teacher perceptions of pupil voice in England with regards to school policies. These results further differed from the Danish teacher and pupil responses, where overall there seemed to be an agreement between teachers and pupils that pupils did have a say in the anti-bullying policies in their schools.

When asked if the pupils thought that the policies were helpful in reducing or managing pupil conflicts most pupils in the English schools said yes. The trend continued in the Danish schools, with a number of them citing specific measures such as *Kort og Godt* as being very helpful. However, a selection of pupils believed that

speaking to their teachers was the most helpful approach to dealing with conflict, rather than using the policies and protocols in their schools. This was especially the case in the two Danish schools, where some pupils said that *Kort og Godt* and *Klassens Time* were useful but that they preferred to speak to their teachers about their issues. In England, pupils also preferred speaking to their teachers as opposed to using school programmes. However, when asked at interview why this was the case, they said that using the school programmes made them feel as though they had done something wrong, or that they were "snitching" on someone, whereas they were more comfortable speaking to teachers and staff that they trusted and in their own time. This is an interesting result, showing that across all four schools and two countries, pupils and teachers felt that the school policies applied were helpful in reducing pupil conflicts.

7.4.5 Comparison of overall awareness of school policies in England and Denmark

Overall, both teachers and pupils showed a clear understanding of what was meant by conflict management policies, and the majority of teachers and pupils across both countries accepted that their schools had some conflict management measures. However, teachers' and pupils' perceptions differed significantly about the level of pupil involvement in the development and application of these policies. Where teachers were fairly confident that pupils had a significant role in conflict management policies, pupils believed the opposite.

This difference in perceptions could be attributed perhaps to the small number of pupils who were invited to participate in the development of conflict management policies. Therefore, the number of pupils who had significant involvement in designing the policies would be small. Yet it could also be that while a number of pupils participated in the design of the policies, only a small amount of their input was used in the final drafting. According to Webster (1993), many of the conflict management policies he examined in the United States were developed in a top-down manner, meaning that teachers and other so-called conflict experts had the major role in designing the policies.

Examining whether pupils felt they had a say in the school policies was an integral aspect of this study because I wanted to examine not only if pupils felt they had

a voice and whether it was being heard, but also whether they had a say in the conflict strategies deployed by their schools. I was mainly interested in examining this issue as some of the literature on this topic suggested that pupil involvement in school decision making was minimal (Webster, 1993; Raney, 2009). The findings from this study show that pupils did not feel that they had a say in the policies in their schools. It further shows that the minimal input of pupils into conflict management policies was not school-specific but an issue in all of the four case study schools across both countries.

While it is not unheard of that pupils drove certain initiatives in some schools, it remains that majority of pupils do not feel that they have a say. This is disheartening, as some research has shown that a lack of pupil involvement in school policies can have negative effects on pupils. For instance, Webster (1993) and Raney (2009) argue that, for conflict management policies to be effective, they have to be developed in a comprehensive manner from the ground up; the voice of the pupil is integral to the proper design and application of these policies. This highlights the need for pupils to be more involved in matters concerning them.

With regards to the effectiveness of these policies, both teachers and pupils felt (to a certain degree) that they were effective in managing or reducing pupil conflicts. These results indicate that the stakeholders responsible for developing such programmes are doing something right. In fact, the results of this study indicate that the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the policies appear to be more due to lack of pupil awareness that such policies existed in their schools. Moreover, when looking at the effectiveness of the policies in Denmark, it appears that the use of pre-emptive protocols such as *Kort og Godt* implemented during *Klassens Time* is reducing the level of conflict in those schools.

However, protocols similar to *Kort og Godt* and *Klassens Time* were not found in the English schools. Instead, protocols and policies were in place that were reactive in nature, such as anger management, SU (Support Unit) school counsellors and police patrolling the school grounds. Interestingly enough, even with these protocols in place, fighting still happened both in E1 and E2. Perhaps the inclusion of *Kort og Godt* and *Klassens Time* session into schools in England could be one way of reducing pupil fighting. Due to the nature and intention of this study, however, an assessment of the

potential effectiveness of programmes such as *Kort og Godt* and *Klassemode* in English schools was not possible. However, it might prove useful in future research to assess whether such measures could be transposed into schools in England and whether their implementation into English schools would reduce fighting.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has summarized the data on teacher and pupil perceptions of, and responses to conflict as well as their awareness of self-harm and school policies on conflict management. On the whole, teachers shared a similar view of pupil conflicts in that they defined them as being verbal. However, there was a difference in perceptions amongst pupils cross-culturally. Danish pupils seemed to be in agreement with the teachers in that their definitions of conflict were also mainly verbal. The English pupils, however, defined and viewed pupil conflicts more as physical, mainly fighting. The findings of this study expanded on the results of a Unicef (2007) report on the quality of relationships, where pupils in England were found to fight more with one another when having a conflict, leading to them having poorer quality of peer relationships. According to the 2007 Unicef report, this was in contrast to their Danish counterparts who seemed to react less violently to conflicts that they experienced; again, this was similar to the findings of this research.

A significant finding with regard to pupil and teacher perceptions of pupil involvement in school policy making was that majority of teachers across all schools said that pupils did have a say in the school policies on bullying (as there were no anti-conflict policies), whereas pupils in the two English schools disagreed. This was significant not only because it showed that there was a difference in perceptions between pupils and teachers in England on pupil voice in policy making, but also because as the results of this study also indicated that pupils and teachers do share different perceptions of conflict; where pupils had a more physical view, teachers viewed pupil conflict to be more verbal.

Therefore, if we start with this difference in perceptions of pupil conflicts between pupils and teachers, we see that in order for conflict management approaches to be effective they need to tackle the conflicts that pupils are actually experiencing. If

pupils are saying that the conflicts that they are experiencing are mostly physical, and teachers are saying that they are mostly verbal; if teachers have a say on the anti-bullying policies in their schools, and pupils do not, then there is a problem. As a result, the management approaches implemented to handle pupil conflicts are not targeted at the conflicts that the pupils are actually experiencing. This could, therefore, explain why certain conflicts are persistent and why some have gone unnoticed by teachers.

Chapter 8

Conclusion, Limitations and Implications

8.0 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the research. It will start with a review of the previous chapters and contents. The review will be followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study. The thesis concludes with a consideration of the implications of the results of the current study and suggestions for possible further research.

8.1 A review of the outline of the thesis

This thesis started by looking at various definitions and theories of conflict, seeking to find a working definition of conflict. However, research into the literature yielded that no one universally applied definition of conflict exists, and that conflict is perceived and defined according to individual and/or group experiences. However, the data collected highlighted the impact of school-specific and cultural factors relating to perceptions of and responses to conflict.

Chapter 3 looked at the method and instruments chosen for this study, and in doing so the methodological issues were identified and discussed, along with the strengths and weaknesses of the selected approaches. The method selected for this study was a mixed methods approach within a comparative study. The adoption of other methodological approaches was considered, but rejected as the mixed methods approach was the most appropriate for this particular study. The instruments used to collect data in this study consisted of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. As this study adopted a mixed methods approach, it included data analysis that involved a mixture of statistical methods and qualitative interpretations.

The data collected was presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and analysed in Chapter 7. Several findings and associations were identified in these chapters which provided responses to the research questions. The findings will be examined and commented upon in greater detail in this chapter, in the context of the mixed methods approach and within the literature, thus providing further validation and interpretation of evidence gathered in the study.

This chapter presents the researcher's journey, which included the process of constructing and understanding perceptions of and responses to conflict in secondary schools in England and *folkeskoler* in Denmark. Essentially, it was a process of unearthing data and constructing a solid analytical foundation from which further research could be developed.

8.2 Strengths of this study

There were several strengths to this study, all of which are discussed below.

8.2.1 An illustration from uncharted territory

This study investigated perceptions of and responses to conflict in four schools in two different countries. It was significant as currently there is very limited research on pupil and teacher perceptions of conflict in secondary schools, especially within the comparative domain.

Most studies of conflict that use a comparative approach focus on external conflict, mainly bullying. Internal conflicts such as self-harm, suicidal thoughts and eating disorders are much underrepresented in the literature. This study filled those missing gaps by showing that pupils in secondary schools in England and pupils in *folkeskoler* in Denmark do experience other forms of conflict apart from bullying. In fact, the findings of this study contrast with the vast literature representing bullying as the main type of pupil conflict in secondary schools, in that it concluded that bullying was amongst the least mentioned pupil conflicts, not only in both England and Denmark but also by both pupils and teachers. This research also provided an opportunity for

readers from other countries to understand secondary school and folkeskole based conflicts in their own countries, by comparing them to the findings from this study.

8.2.2 A balanced view

One of the main strengths of this study was its investigation of perceptions of and responses to conflict, not just from the perspective of the pupils, but also taking account teachers' views. This angle helped to give the study a more comprehensive and balanced foundation. Moreover, by adopting a comparative approach, the results from one country were used as a counterpoint for examining the situation in another country. The convenience based sampling allowed data to be gathered on comparable ground, thereby allowing the comparisons made in this study to be fair to all participating participants and schools.

8.2.3 The mixed methods approach

The mixed methods approach was one of the strengths of this study because it allowed me to review the phenomenon under study from different perspectives. It also enabled similar data to be gathered data from different sources. This not only strengthened the evidence found in this study but also provided a more well-rounded and holistic picture of pupil and teacher perceptions of and responses to conflict in secondary schools and *folkeskoler* in England and Denmark. This further reinforced the validity of this study.

8.2.4 Interpretive approach

Another strength of this study derived from the application of the interpretive paradigm to examine and understand perceptions of conflict. Applying the interpretive approach proved beneficial to this study because it helped provide a subjective interpretation of conflict from the perspectives of the participants, which was one of the aims of this study. The interpretive method also helped establish a channel for the student participants to communicate their experiences openly and in a free context through a set of open-ended questions. Moreover, because the analysis of the qualitative data was done by using the exact words and phrases of the participants themselves, it

was possible to conduct a more precise and representative analysis of the participants' perceptions, which would not have been possible with pre-set categories for analysis.

8.2.5 The conceptualisation of conflict

The findings from this study enabled me to gain a better understanding of how conflict was perceived and responded to by pupils and teachers in England and Denmark. Overall, pupils and teachers differed in how they perceived and responded to conflict. Using the data from this study I was also able to make general comments both about each school and across all the four schools specific to this study.

8.2.6 A systematic and thorough investigation

This study was structured thoroughly taking account of key elements of ethical and methodological good practice, such as, participant confidentiality and anonymity, researcher reflexivity and validity. Also, an extensive literature review was carried out to provide a basis for comparison and validation. The combination of methodology and literature review enabled me to provide a systematic review of perceptions and responses to conflict across the four schools.

8.2.7 Validity

According to Lisa Guion (2002), "validity, in qualitative research, relates to whether the finding of a study is true and certain". She defines 'true' as "findings accurately reflecting the real situation" (p. 1). What this means is that in qualitative research, the validity of an enquiry depends on the extent to which the researcher has been able to truly represent the participants, the purposes of the research and the appropriateness of the processes involved. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that different research paradigms serve different purposes and have different goals. For these reasons, it is important to appreciate that the criteria for judging validity should not be the same if the research method is different or if the goal of the method is different. Bob Dick (1999) argues that validity in research should be judged based on the extent to which research is representative of an actual situation under investigation, rather than focusing on whether the results of a study supports a researcher's

hypothesis. Therefore, the criteria for judging validity in different methodological situations will be different.

Because my particular research consisted of four case studies, there were several measures that I took to strengthen the validity of my study. For one, I ensured that I stayed in each school long enough to gather the necessary data (Merriam, 1985). Another way I increased the validity of my study was by collecting referential materials, in the form of a literature review, that would complement the file of materials from the actual site (questionnaires, and classroom observations) with additional documentary support (follow-up interviews) (Merriam, 1985). Additionally, validity was strengthened by engaging in consultation with participants prior to the final draft of the report. This consultation consisted of cross-referencing my notes, taken during interview, with the respondents in order to ensure the accuracy of my interview notes. This process occurred at the conclusion of each interview. This process eliminated researcher bias, as I was not filling in ideas or hypothesising about what a respondent said during interview. Instead, by engaging in this consultation, I was able to ensure that the responses I collected were fully defined and accurately reflective of the respondents answer(s).

Moreover, in order to strengthen the authenticity and certainty of my research, I applied methodological triangulation (discussed above in Chapter 3). Merriam (1985) argues that triangulation is another way that the certainty of one's study can be strengthened. Similarly, Guion (2002), states that methodological triangulation, specifically the use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods, to study a phenomenon increases the validity of one's study if the conclusions from each of the methods are the same. Having said that, methodological triangulation was used in this study by mixing qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations) to validate pupil and teacher perceptions of, and responses to conflict.

Finally, because my study was a case study, I was not concerned about getting consistent measurements, replicating or generalizing my results. Therefore, external validity was not relevant to this study and will not be discussed further.

8.3 Limitations

There were inevitable limitations to this study, which will be considered below.

8.3.1 The representativeness of the samples

I wanted a comprehensive sample to represent Denmark and England in order to obtain a cross-section of cultural and educational factors. However, as there were only two case study schools in each country, as opposed to a larger sample, I am not sure to what extent the samples are valid outside the four schools. Therefore, I cannot make a cultural claim if my sample is not truly representative. Although not practical for this study, the samples could have been more representative if I had selected more schools, schools from different socio-economic and geographical areas and if I had looked at the demographics, to establish what cultures make up Denmark and Danish society and England and English society. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and lack of resources, I was unable to examine the effect of geography or socio-economic status on the perceptions and responses to conflict. While aspects of the respondents' answers alluded to geographical or socio-economic factors, I cannot be certain of how significant these factors were.

8.3.2 Broader consideration of other factors

Due to a bottom-up (inductive) approach being taken, some other institutional factors were not included in this study. For example, the effects of the Local Authorities and other organisations on schools in England were not specifically considered. The objective of my study was to obtain an organic view of perceptions and responses to conflict in secondary schools and *folkeskoler*.

There were also some aspects of my study that I could have explored and elaborated on further, such as the school ethos and its influence on how pupils and teachers perceived and responded to conflict. I did not ask as many questions about school ethos as I should have; moreover, the questions that I did ask on school ethos were not further explored, due to space and time constraints. Following are a few examples of some scaled questions focusing on school ethos that were included in the

questionnaires but not explored further: I like coming to school, I feel safe at this school, I feel I belong at this school, and pupil conflict happens a lot at my school. I feel that, had I examined these questions further, then I might have gained a different picture of my topic. Although I was able to draw some tentative conclusions on school ethos based on deductive reasoning from the data collecting methods, it was more inferential than factual.

Furthermore, eating disorders and deliberate self-harm were included in this study in order to highlight that different types of conflict are being experienced by pupils in secondary schools and outside the mainstream focus on notions of bullying. Deliberate self-harm was included in the data analysis, rather than a discussion of eating disorders, as not many pupils/teachers filled in an answer to the questions pertaining to this issue on the questionnaire. The lack of answers relating to eating disorders in the questionnaire dissuaded me from following up this issue in interview. Therefore, without further analysis/validation of the questionnaire responses in interview, I did not include a discussion on the topic for fear that I would input biased comments or thoughts in the analysis.

8.3.3 Documentation

Originally, documentation was included in this study as an instrument for data collection. The purpose of the documentation was to act as secondary data, reinforcing the interview, questionnaire and observational data. However, during the field research only one of the four schools in this study was able to provide me with a wealth of accurate and up to date documentation. The other three schools either did not have any, or sufficient, documentation, or did not want to share it with me. Therefore the use of documentation was limited and not used in this study; had the available documentation been used the data would have been skewed and not consistent.

8.3.4 Language and cultural barriers

When conducting a cross-national study it is inevitable to come across language and cultural barriers. In this study the language barrier applied especially to data from Denmark as it required translation - from English to Danish, then back again to English.

Often it was not possible to find equivalent words for translating English to Danish and *vice versa*, which is why there might be some subtleties missing in the final English version of some of the data. Moreover, because I had to translate the English questionnaires into Danish, there were naturally concerns about issues of translation. In order to minimize these issues, I took several steps. I asked a native speaker of the language to help me translate the questionnaires into Danish. Then once the Danish pupils and teachers had completed the questionnaires we then translated the Danish responses back into English. I also consulted an English-Danish/Danish-English dictionary for additional translation and spelling checks.

On the whole there were few issues of translation, however there was a word that the pupils often used in Danish, *sur* that we could not find a direct translation for into English; the closest English equivalent was "pissed off". Also, the word "bullying" is defined differently in Denmark than in England. This is partly because of the notion of bullying in Denmark. The word for bullying in Danish is *mobning*. *Mobning* in this context either means bullying of an individual by a group in any context, or specifically any workplace bullying (Smith et al., 2002). Though the English word "mob" denotes a crowd, often in a destructive or hostile mood, German, Polish, Italian and several other European languages have adopted "mobbing" as a loanword to describe all forms of bullying, including that by single persons.

The resultant German verb *mobben* can also be used for physical attacks, slander against teachers on the internet and intimidation by superiors, with an emphasis on the victims' continuous fear, rather than the perpetrators' will to exclude them. In translation back into English, therefore, the word may be a false friend, since "mobbing" in its primary sense denotes a disorderly gathering by a crowd and in workplace psychology specifically refers to ganging up by others to harass and intimidate an individual (Olweus, 1993). These differences in definitions are noteworthy as we look at the results of the study because it means that any differences found between English and Danish responses with response to the words: bullying or mobbing could be as result of definitional differences of perceptions.

Cultural influence was another possible limitation within this study. Because the participants could have interpreted an idea using different cultural influences, it was

clear that there was evidence of cultural influence (Unicef, 2007) but it was not part of the remit for my research to review in detail the culture of each country, so I was only able to comment where I felt it was likely that wider culture had influenced my findings.

8.3.5 The definition of conflict

The definition of conflict developed for this study was limited; the findings suggested that conflict should have been seen from a broader perspective and that conflict involves the curriculum, family, community and the society at large (Raney, 2009). What also became evident from the results of this study is that factors relating to situations outside the classroom also affect the conflicts that occur within school; meaning that the definition of conflict cannot, and should not, be confined to the walls of the school, as pupils can bring their problems from outside school into the classroom, which may impact on the level of conflict occurring in their schools. An example of this can be found in the reasons that most pupils gave for self-harming: because of difficulties in their home lives.

8.4 Implications

8.4.1 Implications for policy makers - *Learning from each other*

The findings of this study suggested that participants' perceptions and responses to conflict differed between England and Denmark, particularly in relation to pupil and teacher perceptions of school policies. This is a learning opportunity for countries to reflect on their own schools' policies relating to conflict and to learn from each other. The study highlighted certain systematic differences in school protocols and practices. Some of these differences, for example the class teacher system in *folkeskoler*, had a direct impact on pupil views regarding school policies, teacher involvement in reducing pupil conflict and the openness with which pupils approached their teachers when they did experience conflicts.

Importance of training for teachers

Teachers in Denmark appeared to have a firmer grasp of the application of conflict management techniques. This was echoed by the Danish pupil responses

regarding the ability of their teachers to manage their conflicts. Moreover, both pupils and teachers in Denmark regarded it as the responsibility of the teachers to manage or reduce pupil conflicts. This was a feeling that was not found in the data from the English schools, in that the majority of teachers in England put the responsibility for reducing pupil conflict onto everyone, not just teachers. An explanation for this difference could be due to teachers in Denmark and England having different roles. Teachers in Denmark have a more pastoral role, whereas the English teachers have a more authoritarian role.

Moreover, training techniques for teachers in each country should be examined. It could be that the method with which teachers are trained has an impact on the ability of a teacher to implement effective conflict management techniques.

8.4.2 Implications for teachers - *Reconsidering the definition of conflict*

Results indicated that pupils and teachers do not share the same view of conflict. Teachers must remember that what they consider conflict may not be shared by their pupils. Teachers may have a different understanding of conflict because they have a deeper knowledge of the concept, deriving their definition from experience and understanding of conflict within different contexts. However, teachers in both countries need to reassess their definitions of conflict in order to take into account of that of their pupils. This means making a conscious effort to understand pupil conflicts from the perspective of the pupils themselves. This reassessment of pupil conflict will help teachers better relate to their pupils and in turn, make the right decisions on how best to help them with their troubles. The data collected indicated that the better the teachers understood pupil conflicts, the more trust the pupils had in them and their ability to help them.

Breaking down the impression of authority

The Danish pupils reached out to their teachers more often for help with conflict as they felt more comfortable with them, in contrast to the feelings of their English peers. One potential explanation for this is that many pupils in Denmark keep the same class teacher for a number of years, a structure that is not followed in England. However, without having to remodel the English education system, a perceived

reduction in authority might make English pupils more apt to interact with their teachers in managing their conflict. One of the results taken from the questionnaires suggests that pupils in England readily confide in their peers, parents, other non-authoritative adults, but less in their teachers. This suggests that if teachers in England could reduce the perception that they are authoritatively empowered over their pupils, they may see an increase in the number of pupils that confide in them. This may be done in a number of ways and is something that should be explored further. A possible suggestion is to apply the Danish model of pedagogy.

8.4.3 Implications for pupils - *The relevance to real life*

Understanding what constitutes conflict and finding the most constructive ways of dealing with it can enrich the lives of pupils. This can help them to develop a better sense of self, while also strengthening the relationships they have with others. Therefore, it is critical that pupils understand the importance of developing conflict management skills and that they work with their teachers and schools to improve them.

The importance of being active in conflict management policies

As seen from the results of this study, the majority of pupils did not feel that they had a say in policies concerning them. Therefore it is important for pupils to become involved in the development of conflict management policies in their schools. It is not enough for policy makers to develop these policies, as the results of this study indicate that pupils and teachers do not always share either the same notion of conflict, or the same ideas on how to address it. It is also not enough for only some pupils to be actively involved in creating these policies, as that will only partially involve the student body and only give a voice to a select few, who may not necessarily represent the pupils who are actually experiencing the conflicts.

8.4.4 Implications for researchers - *Cultural difference: an important factor*

The fact that the education system in both countries is administered at the local level makes the policies in each country school-specific, and suggests that cultural fabric accounts for the similarities found in the responses in the English and in the

Danish schools. It would also be interesting to see if these cultural factors influence the types of conflict management policies administered in the schools.

Elements for future studies of school-based conflict

I have emphasised the need for viewing school-based conflict from a more comprehensive perspective, this study provided some of the elements which require future investigation. For example, it highlighted the importance of pre-emptive sessions (*Klassens Time*) and activities (*Kort og Godt*) that are aimed at reducing pupil conflict. These sessions and activities are prominent aspects of conflict management in Denmark which, according to participants' views, seemed effective and therefore are resources that could be considered within the English secondary school system.

In summary, the implications of this study are intended to contribute to the understanding of school-based conflict in England and Denmark. Moreover, findings in this study can help identify strategies for future improvement in responses to conflict and offer a starting point for further studies on school-based conflict.

8.5 Contribution to knowledge - *Need for expansion of views of conflict*

The results of this research raise questions about the literature that presents bullying as the most common, and the most serious, type of conflict experienced by pupils in secondary schools. This study suggests that there is more to conflict in secondary schools and *folkeskoler* than bullying. It also suggests that there may be a need for schools to broaden their focus and responses to pupil conflicts. For one, the findings could be seen as suggesting that the almost exclusive focus on bullying in the literature and in school policies is too narrow. Secondly, future research and policy development should broaden its focus, giving recognition to the existence of a range of negative conflict situations. Finally, schools should reassess their responses to bullying and poor behaviour in light of these insights.

The role of culture and education systems

Differences in culture and education have potentially played a part in the variation in responses relating to pupil/teacher perception and responses to conflict in English and Danish secondary schools. Certain cultural phenomena can impact on the way teachers

respond to problems. An example of this is the Danish attitude to civic responsibility, which seemed to result both in teachers feeling greater individual responsibility for responding to pupil conflict and in Danish pupils feeling more confident in their teachers' ability to manage their conflicts. Perhaps an examination of the English cultural fabric would bring about the development of protocols and practices in the way that Danish attitude to civic responsibility has promoted the use of teachers as pastoral carers in the classroom.

Culture may also provide an explanation as to why Danish *folkeskoler* allow a lot more time for pupils to discuss their conflicts with teachers and peers. Perhaps a more holistic view of wellbeing exists in Danish culture that facilitates efforts to decrease and manage conflict in *folkeskoler*. *Klassens Time* is a prime example of a holistic approach to dealing with pupil conflict. Such extra time for dealing with conflicts in a mutually agreed environment is not prevalent in English secondary schools. Circle time, which is similar to *Klassens Time* in that it puts pupils together to discuss conflict in the classroom, is available for pupils in English schools but is principally used in primary schools.

Perhaps there is a shared view in English culture that pupils of a certain age should be able to deal with their conflicts more independently. This notion is certainly evident in the results of this study that suggest that pupils in England are more apt to turn to their friends or family for advice about conflict rather than speak to their teachers, or even a group of their peers in a controlled environment like *Klassens Time*. Therefore, developing the almost unique Danish class teacher system of providing guaranteed time for pupils to discuss their views and raise problems (something far less usual in the UK) appears to have some beneficial results and may be worth emulating.

Moreover, although there are significant cultural differences between England and Denmark according to the Unicef report (2007), in relation to conflict, pupils and teachers in both countries were confronted by broadly similar problems and perceived things in broadly similar ways, and the same can be said of pupils in both countries. Moreover, teachers in England and Denmark broadly shared similar perceptions, and in Denmark, the pupils shared broadly similar perceptions. However, quite significant differences were found between how teachers and pupils experienced and perceived

things in the two countries, especially between teachers and pupils in England. This is something that has fairly significant implications in both countries.

Self-harm appears to be an international phenomenon

In spite of Unicef (2007) suggesting that the general level of children's well-being is much higher in Denmark than in England, it appears that self-harm is just as prevalent, and exists to the same degree; it therefore needs to be recognised as both a complex phenomenon and as having diverse causes. This research has shown it was found in both the two rather different cultures but, on the basis of this limited evidence, assertions on how widespread it is internationally would be merely speculative.

A bottom-up approach to address the management of conflict within schools

As the data collected in this study demonstrates, there were several needs and factors for effective conflict management policies suggested in this study which will repay future investigation. More specifically, there is a need to take a bottom-up approach when addressing and managing pupil conflict, particularly when it comes to pupil voice in the development of school policies on conflict. This issue requires addressing in both countries, especially since there were significant differences in the perceptions of teachers and pupils on the issue. What was particularly alarming - and educational at the same time - was that pupils across all four schools were aware of existing conflict management policies in their schools yet, despite this awareness, especially of the anti-bullying policy, the majority did not feel that they had a say in them; the majority of their teachers, on the other hand, claimed that the pupil voice had played a part in these policies. This not only showed a great difference in perceptions between pupil and teacher responses with regards to pupil voice but also demonstrated pupils' perceptions that they are not actively involved in matters concerning them.

The fact that pupils questioned in all schools felt a lack of involvement in the creation of anti-conflict policies suggests a lack of democracy, pupil voice and involvement of pupils in the creation of conflict management policies within these schools. There is also a noticeable need, in both countries, to take a 'bottom-up' approach in the development of conflict policies in order to include pupils in policy decision making in their schools, making pupil voice what it is intended to be: by the pupils, for the pupils. Thus, this research underlines the point that seeking to give pupils

voice, and actually achieving this, are complex issues. However, future investigation on this aspect is needed and could provide further useful insight.

8.6 Reflections after the journey of this study

The focus of this study was to compare perceptions of and responses to school-based conflict in England and Denmark; this presented some challenges. Firstly, I was not familiar with the education system in England or what policies schools in either country had in place to deal with conflict. This was a challenge for me to investigate, especially in such an unfamiliar environment. Secondly, I had to investigate relatively uncharted territory; although conflict was an area under investigation in schools in both countries, the focus was mainly on bullying. This offered a significant challenge, particularly as there was very little on the topic in the literature to help guide my progress. However, not having a guiding hand proved beneficial, as it enabled me to uncover other types of conflicts that were underrepresented in the literature.

Moreover, I did not attempt to make any judgement on whether pupils or teachers had a more accurate perception of conflict, nor did I evaluate which country had better conflict management practices in place. I sought to present to the reader an organic depiction of perceptions of conflict and responses undertaken by individuals and schools. Through my investigations, I came to realise how important it was to allow the participants to provide their own genuine take on conflict. For example, enabling pupils and teachers to air their thoughts separately allowed them to provide authentic answers. Moreover, it also helped to highlight the differences and similarities in perceptions and responses.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter concludes my thesis. In this chapter I acknowledged both the strengths and limitations of this study. I also provided suggestions for further work in this field. This study proved to be not only an academic development but also a personal one. I hope that this study will provide some practical elements for future studies into conflict in secondary schools in England and *folkeskoler* in Denmark. Finally, this research has touched uncharted territory in that very limited research has been done on

the topic. There is a lot more to be discovered on the topic that will ultimately benefit pupils, teachers and schools.

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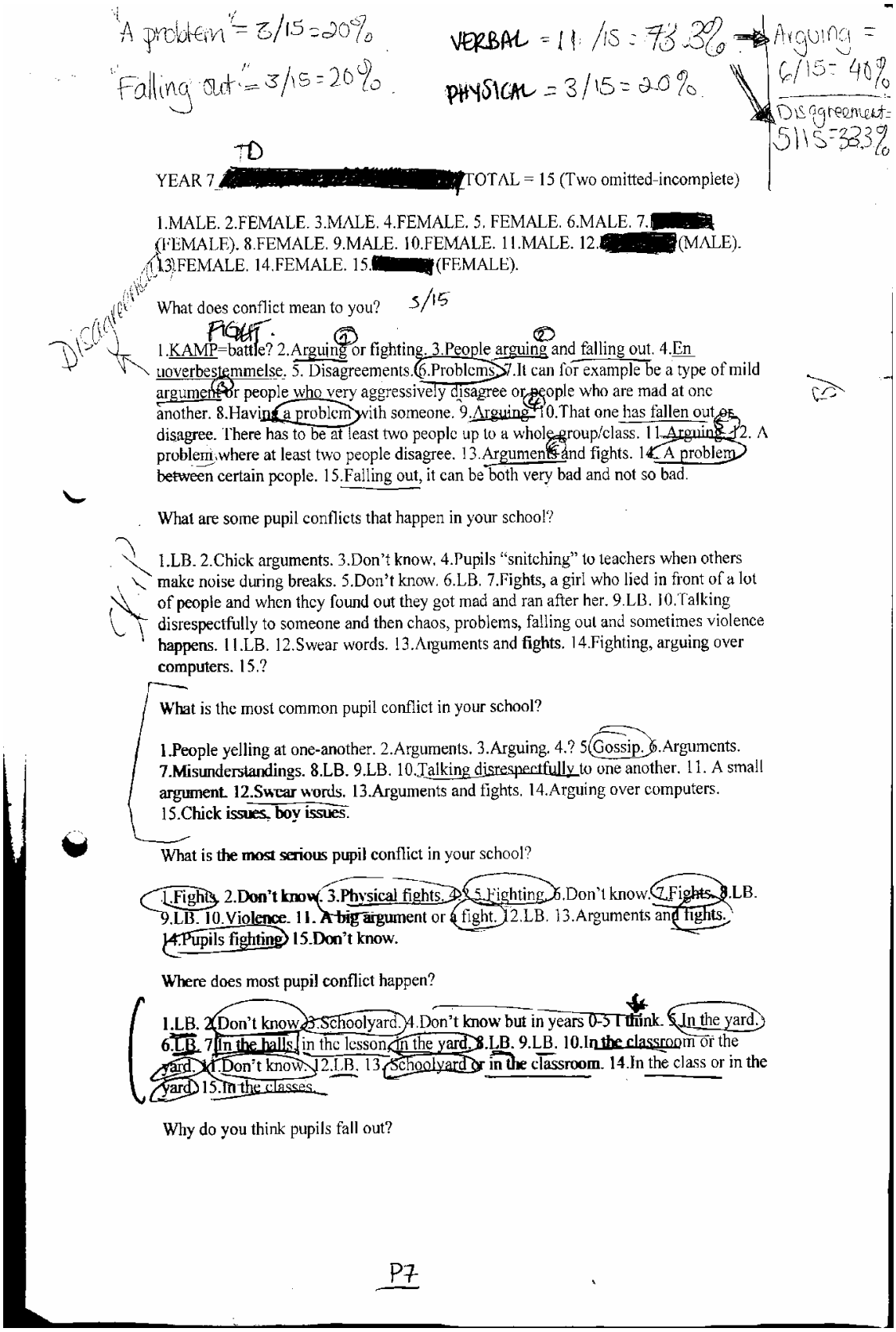
Appendix 1 - Sample data analysis



"A problem" = 3/15 = 20%
"Falling out" = 3/15 = 20%
VERBAL = 11/15 = 73.3%
PHYSICAL = 3/15 = 20%
Arguing = 6/15 = 40%
Disagreement = 5/15 = 33.3%

TD

YEAR 7 [redacted] TOTAL = 15 (Two omitted-incomplete)

1.MALE. 2.FEMALE. 3.MALE. 4.FEMALE. 5. FEMALE. 6.MALE. 7. [redacted] (FEMALE). 8.FEMALE. 9.MALE. 10.FEMALE. 11.MALE. 12. [redacted] (MALE). 13.FEMALE. 14.FEMALE. 15. [redacted] (FEMALE).

DISAGREEMENT

What does conflict mean to you? 5/15

FIGHT

1.KAMP=battle? 2.Arguing or fighting. 3.People arguing and falling out. 4.En uoverbestemmelse. 5. Disagreements. 6.Problems. 7.It can for example be a type of mild argument or people who very aggressively disagree or people who are mad at one another. 8.Having a problem with someone. 9.Arguing. 10.That one has fallen out or disagree. There has to be at least two people up to a whole group/class. 11.Arguing. 12. A problem where at least two people disagree. 13.Arguments and fights. 14. A problem between certain people. 15.Falling out, it can be both very bad and not so bad.

What are some pupil conflicts that happen in your school?

1.LB. 2.Chick arguments. 3.Don't know. 4.Pupils "snitching" to teachers when others make noise during breaks. 5.Don't know. 6.LB. 7.Fights, a girl who lied in front of a lot of people and when they found out they got mad and ran after her. 9.LB. 10.Talking disrespectfully to someone and then chaos, problems, falling out and sometimes violence happens. 11.LB. 12.Swear words. 13.Arguments and fights. 14.Fighting, arguing over computers. 15.?

What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

1.People yelling at one-another. 2.Arguments. 3.Arguing. 4.? 5.Gossip. 6.Arguments. 7.Misunderstandings. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.Talking disrespectfully to one another. 11. A small argument. 12.Swear words. 13.Arguments and fights. 14.Arguing over computers. 15.Chick issues, boy issues.

What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

1.Fights. 2.Don't know. 3.Physical fights. 4.? 5.Fighting. 6.Don't know. 7.Fights. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.Violence. 11. A big argument or a fight. 12.LB. 13.Arguments and fights. 14.Pupils fighting. 15.Don't know.

Where does most pupil conflict happen?

1.LB. 2.Don't know. 3.Schoolyard. 4.Don't know but in years 0-5 I think. 5.In the yard. 6.LB. 7.In the halls, in the lesson, in the yard. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.In the classroom or the yard. 11.Don't know. 12.LB. 13.Schoolyard or in the classroom. 14.In the class or in the yard. 15.In the classes.

Why do you think pupils fall out?

P7

1.LB. 2.Disagreements. 3.Don't know. 4.Misunderstandings. 5.Disagreements or provocation. 6.They cannot get along. 7.It varies. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.Because they have their own opinions about different things. 11.LB. 12.LB. 13.Don't know. 14.It varies from school to school so I can't really answer that. 15.Disagreements.

When someone falls out with me, I usually…

1.Ignore them. 2.Would like some time to think about it, then solve it. 3.Try to make up again. 4.Be upset with them. 5. Be upset and irritated. 6.LB. 7.Get it solved and by talking about it. 8.Prefer to solve it right away. 9.Talk to them alone about it. 10.Talking about what has happened and try to get it solved the best way possible. 11.Don't know. 12.LB. 13.Go to the teacher. 14. Get it solved as soon as possible. 15.Try to talk about it.

When I fall out with someone, I usually…

1.Ignore them. 2.Would like some time to think about it, then solve it. 3.Stop talking to them. 4.Backbite about them until I feel better. 5. Backbite about them until I feel better. 6.LB. 7. Get is solved by talking about it. 8.Solve it. 9.Talk to them alone. 10. Talking about what has happened and try to get it solved the best way possible. 11.Don't know. 12.LB. 13.go to the teacher. 14.Get it solved as soon as possible. 15.Try to solve it or talk about it.

Most conflicts can be resolved by…

1.By ignoring the other person dammit! 2.Talking through it. 3.Talking. 4.I think it varies. 5.I think most of the time it goes over by itself. 6.LB. 7.Talking about it or apologizing to one another. 8.Talking about it. 9.LB. 10.Talking. 11.Someone stopping them. 12.LB. 13.Talking or going to the teacher. 14.Talking about things. 15.Talking.

Pupils **settle their conflicts** in my school by…

1.Do I **have to say it again?** 2. **Talking**. 3.Talking. 4.Backbiting? 5.Maybe backbiting. 6.Don't **know. 7.Talking about it. 8.**Talking. 9.LB. 10.LB. 11.? 12.LB. 13? 14.Talking about things. **15.Talking.**

It is……'s **responsibility to manage** pupil conflict at my school.

1.LB. 2.Don't know. 3.Pupils/teachers. 4.Class teachers. 5.Class teacher. 6.LB. 7.Pupils and teachers. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.LB. 11.LB. 12.LB. 13? 14.It varies. 15?

If you have been in a conflict at school that is not on the list above, please mention it here

1.LB. 2.LB. 3.LB. 4.No. 5.LB. 6.LB. 7.Can't **think of any at the moment**. 8.LB. 9.LB. 10.LB. 11.No. 12.LB. 13.LB. 14.LB. 15.LB.

P8

How do you feel about 'emos'?

1.Do not care. 2.Ok. 3.LB. 4.It's their choice. 5.I don't care. 6.Don't know. 7. I think it is totally okay that they have chosen to live the way they have…it's their own choice…but I also think that it's sad that some of them self-harm. 8.Ok, they are nice. 9.Ok. 10.I'm okay with it, even though they have decided themselves. I have a friend who is an emo but I am not one myself. 11.? 12. Ok. 13.I am an emo myself so I am ok with it. 14.I am okay with it. They have a right to express themselves. I have a girlfriend who is an emo and I would NEVER push her away. 15.N/A.

If you have a problem at school who(m) do you talk to about it?

1.My cousin or sister. 2.My parents, teacher. 3.My friends. 4.My mother. 5.My parents. 6.LB. 7.My girlfriends, my mother and the teachers if I feel like getting them involved. 8.LB. 9.Mum or friends (not teachers, de blander sig). 10.My mom and my teacher. 11.Don't know. 12.LB. 13.My mother or my teacher. 14.Girlfriends, parents, a teacher who I feel I have a good relationship with. 15.My girlfriends.

Appendix 2 – CRB disclosure form

Enhanced Disclosure

Page 1 of 2

disclosure

Disclosure Number 001224230101

Date of Issue: 28 JANUARY 2009

Applicant Personal Details

Surname: AFNAN-RIZZUTO

Forename(s): KAMILYA

Other Names: AFNAN, KAMILYA

Date of Birth: 07 DECEMBER 1980

Place of Birth: SHIRAZ

Gender: FEMALE

Employment Details

Position applied for:
EDUCATION RESEARCH

Name of Employer:
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Countersignatory Details

Registered Person/Body:
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Countersignatory:
MICHAEL YOULTON

Police Records of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands and Final Warnings

NONE RECORDED

Information from the list held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002

NONE RECORDED

Protection of Children Act List information

NONE RECORDED

Protection of Vulnerable Adults List information

NONE RECORDED

Other relevant information disclosed at the Chief Police Officer(s) discretion

NONE RECORDED

Enhanced Disclosure

This document is an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate within the meaning of sections 113B and 116 of the Police Act 1997.

Continued on page 2

THIS DISCLOSURE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY

CRB Criminal Records Bureau, PO Box 165, Liverpool, L[illegible] Telephone: 0870 90 90 844

Appendix 3 – Ethical approval form

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
Institute of
EDUCATION

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees
(MA by research, MPHIL/PhD, EdD)

Name of student

Kamilya Afnan-Rizzuto

MA By research	EdD	PhD
		✓

Project title

"Conceptions of, and responses to conflict: A cross-cultural comparison between Danish and English schools"

Supervisor

Dr. Peter Lang

Funding Body (if relevant)

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

I have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research

Methodology
Please outline the methodology e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

The methodology that I will use for this research is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches. I will use questionnaires, interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation to collect data.

Participants
Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

The participants for this research includes pupils aged 11-16 (key stages 3 + 4) and their prospective teachers.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity
How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

Since it is the researcher who determines the codes and categories for examination, it is likely that they have ideas and thoughts that arise throughout the research, which they would want to add to the data. In order to minimize this, I will keep a journal separate from the actual data to jot down any comments (and the date of those comments) and reflections that arise during data collection and analysis. Another way that I will practice reflexivity is by closely monitoring my own interactions with participants, making sure that my own perceptions and background does not influence the research.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

To ensure confidentiality in my study, I will not release the names of the participants. Another way that I will assure that confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved in this study is to use codes for identifying people (i.e., if interviewing people code them and keep lists in different places), and the use of aliases. Confidentiality will be ensured by obtaining signed statements indicating non-disclosure of the research, restricting access to data which identify respondents, seeking the approval of the respondents prior to any disclosure about respondents take place, non-disclosure of data.

Consent - will prior informed consent be obtained? Yes

- from participants? No from others? Yes- The head teacher of the schools
- explain how this will be obtained. If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

In the initial stage of the research project, I will need to gain access to the schools, which should come from the Headmaster. If permission is granted, I will then need a criminal clearance check, in order to physically access the school(s). Once permission is granted from the head teacher, I will contact the senior teacher of a particular class for their informed consent. In addition because my participants will be between the ages 11-16 years old, I will inform the participants of the nature of the study and make sure that they fully understand the nature of the study, and in cases where participants are not of age to comprehend or agree voluntarily, I will seek alternative ways to seek informed consent, such as the collaboration and approval of those in guardianship. The participants will be told that they freely can choose to take part in the study. The participants' objections will be respected accordingly.

- will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

The nature of the study will be discussed with all participants partaking in the study. No deception will be used.

[redacted]

[redacted] that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

[redacted]

[redacted]_DEGREE_STUDENT[1]

I will recognize the boundaries of my particular competencies and the limitations of my expertise. As a result, I will only provide the services and techniques that I am qualified in or have experience in. I will also keep asking questions of my research as I proceed from design-implementation-analysis-report.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

As I am not conducting a quantitative study, I will not be administering any experiments, thus participants will not be subjected to any altered states or experiences. Further, the study will be conducted in school settings therefore, the Health and Safety Regulations will be followed accordingly. Also, I am in the process of getting CRB checked at the moment, which will provide a further assurance to participant safety. For confirmation of this please see Ms. Jenny Garner at the University.

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes (If yes, please attach a copy.)

I am in the process of getting one.

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I will take action if I see someone acting unethically. I will address the issue directly with the person in breach of the ethics and if that is insufficient, I will then go to the ethical board to discuss the issue.

1. I will consider ethics from the very start of the research
2. I will keep asking questions of my research as I proceed from design-implementation-analysis-report
3. I will consult written codes and supervisor throughout the research process
4. I will consult mentors and colleagues when I am independent

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I will ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused but sharing data with the participants for their feedback and approval. Another way that I

will protect from misuse of data is to follow the informed consent rules and to respect the confidentiality and privacy codes of ethics throughout the research process.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

I will first try to speak to the participant, if they are still upset I will remind them that they can withdraw from the study at any point, and will guarantee them confidentiality. Further, the study will be carried out the knowledge of the Head Teacher, therefore, should any sensitive issues arise, the Head Teacher will be asked to assist in addressing the issue.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

I will discuss the nature of my study openly with the participants from the beginning. I will be conscious of researcher bias. I will follow the informed consent rules. I will respect confidentiality and privacy. I will access necessary ethical resources. I will be honest, fair and respectful of others and I will attempt to clarify for all participants involved in the study, the roles they are performing. I will also act appropriately in accordance with those rules.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

We have discussed it, but agreed that we would discuss it again when I reach the writing up stage, as at the moment it is a non-issue.

Other issues?

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

1. Cost/benefits ratio- The participants might be worried about lost class time, at this point the researcher can inform them that the benefit is that they get to miss class.
2. Educational dilemma-If half the group of children say "no" to participating in the research. One way that I would address this dilemma would be to allow them to not partake, and to ask the head teacher to select another class and try to gain consent from them instead. Or alternatively select another school.

[redacted]_DEGREE_STUDENT[1]

Research student [redacted] Date Oct /16/2008

Supervisor [redacted] Date 3.11.08

Action

Please submit to the Research Office (Louisa Hopkins, room WE132)

Action taken

- ☐ Approved
- ☑ Approved with modification or conditions – see below
- ☐ Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Name [redacted] Date 6.11.08

Signature [redacted]

Stamped

Notes of Action

I recommend you could select if need parental approval as the ratings are 11-16. This is less obvious recruitment & the older end of it would be helpful anyway for all so that parents are informed

Appendix 4 – Pupil questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about conflict in your school. All your answers will be anonymous, only the person who made the questionnaire will see your answers. But, if you are happy to have a chat about the questionnaire afterwards, please leave your name.

PART 1: SCHOOL ETHOS

Below are some statements about conflict and things that may be connected with it. For each statement, put an X in the box 1 to 6 that is closest to the way you feel about it.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure
I like coming to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel safe at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I belong at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils are nice to one another at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils are mean to one another and insult each other a lot at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupil conflict happens a lot at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Older pupils pick on younger pupils at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lots of pupils won't let you play with them at my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
At my school, girls engage in conflict more than boys.	1	2	3	4	5	6
At my school, boys engage more in conflict.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that it is important to teach pupils how to solve their conflicts without fighting or name-calling.	1	2	3	4	5	6
If I have a problem at school, I feel I can talk to the staff about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PART 2: YOUR THOUGHTS ON CONFLICT IN YOUR SCHOOL

Please answer the following questions in your own words

What does "conflict" mean to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What are some pupil conflicts that happen in your school?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the most serious pupil conflict in your school?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Where do most pupil conflicts happen?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why do you think pupils fall out?

_____
_____
_____
_____

PART 3RESPONSES TO PUPIL CONFLICT

Please complete/fill in the following sentences in your own words

1. When someone falls out with me, I usually…
2. When someone falls out with me, I usually…
3. Most conflicts can be resolved by…
4. Pupils settle their conflicts in my school by…
5. It is……'s responsibility to manage pupil conflicts at my school.

Answer each question below by putting an X in either the YES or NO box. If you answer YES to any of the questions, then explain in the "how did you respond" box, how you responded to the conflict.

	Yes	No	How did you respond /what did you do?
Have you ever been called a name at school?			
Have you ever been left out from a group while at school?			
Have you ever been threatened by pupils at school?			
Have you ever been teased by pupils at school?			
Has anyone at your school ever spread rumours or lies about you?			
Have you ever been pushed or shoved while at school?			
Have you ever been kicked, hit, or slapped by other pupils while at school?			
Has another pupil ever stolen your belongings?			
Have you ever experienced racial bullying at school?			
Have you ever experienced homophobic teasing by pupils at school?			
Have you ever experienced sexual comments or gestures by other pupils at school?			
Have you ever been bullied at school because of your religious beliefs?			
Have you ever been a victim of Happy Slapping?			
Have you ever been harassed by other pupils through email or text?			

If you have been in a conflict at school that is not on the list above, please mention it here:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Have you ever made yourself vomit (to lose weight) on purpose?

1. Yes
2. No

If you have answered, "Yes" to the question above, please explain WHY below. Otherwise, please skip to the next question.

_____
_____
_____

Have you ever self-harmed?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

If you have answered, “Yes” to the question above, please explain WHY you have self-harmed below.
Otherwise, please skip to the next question.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Is there an, ‘emo’ (emotionally hardcore) culture at your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not Sure

How do you feel about ‘emo’s?

_____
_____
_____
_____

If you have a problem at school, who do you talk to about it?

_____
_____
_____
_____

PART 4: EXISTING SCHOOL POLICIES

Is there an anti-bully policy in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Do you think that the adults in your school are doing enough to prevent or stop pupil conflicts?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

1. Yes
2. No

PART 5:SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

Please Indicate:

Year ____

Your age: ____

Gender: Boy ____Girl____

THE END. THANK YOU!!!

Appendix 5 – Teacher questionnaire

Name: _____ **Date: _____**

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out your opinion about conflict in your school. Please keep in mind that all your responses will be strictly confidential.

PART 1 GENERAL SCHOOL ETHOS

Below are some statements about conflict and things that may be connected with it. For each statement, put an X in the box 1 to 6 that is closest to the way you feel about it.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
Pupils like coming to school here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils feel safe at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils have a sense of belonging at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils are nice to one another in this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupils are mean to one another and insult each other a lot in this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pupil conflict happens often in this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Older pupils pick on younger pupils at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
In this school, girls are more likely to engage in conflict than boys.	1	2	3	4	5	6
In this school, boys are more likely to engage in conflict than girls.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think that it is very important to teach kids in school about how to solve their arguments without fighting or name-calling.	1	2	3	4	5	6
If a pupil has a problem in this school, they feel that they can talk to the staff about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PART 2 PUPIL CONFLICT IN YOUR SCHOOL

Please answer the following questions in your own words

In your opinion, what does “conflict” mean?

Please describe the types of conflicts that exist between (and within) pupils in your school.

In your opinion, what are the main causes of these conflicts?

What is the most common pupil conflict in your school?

What is the most serious pupil conflict that happens in your school?

Where in school do most pupil conflicts take place?

Why do you think pupils fall out?

PART 3 RESPONSES TO PUPIL CONFLICT

What are some ways that pupils resolve/manage their conflicts in your school?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you resolve/manage pupil conflicts?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Whose responsibility do you think it is to reduce/manage pupil conflict (s) in your school?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Answer each question below by putting an X in either the YES or NO box. If you answer YES to any of the questions, then explain in the "how did you respond" box, how you responded to the conflict.

	Yes	No	How did you respond/what did you do?
Have you seen/witnessed a pupil being called a name while at school?			
Have you seen/witnessed a pupil being excluded from a group while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being threatened by another pupil (other pupils) at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being been teased by another pupil (other pupils) while at school?			
Have you seen/witnessed any pupils spread rumours or lies about another/other pupil (s)?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being pushed or shoved by another/other pupil (s) while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being kicked, hit, or slapped by another/other pupils while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed another pupil take something that belonged to another pupil?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil racially bullying another pupil while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed homophobic teasing amongst pupils while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed pupils making sexual comments or gestures about other pupils while at school?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil bullying another because of their religious beliefs?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being a victim of Happy Slapping by another/other pupil (s)?			
Have you ever seen/witnessed a pupil being harassed by another/other pupil (s) through email or text?			

If you have seen or heard of a conflict that pupils at your school are or have experienced at school that is not mentioned above, please mention it here:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Is vomiting (to lose weight) a pupil problem that exists in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Is self-harm a pupil problem that exists in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Is there an, 'emo' (emotionally hard core) culture at your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

How do you feel about 'emo's?

_____
_____
_____
_____

If a pupil has a problem at school, who do they turn to?

_____
_____
_____
_____

PART 4 EXISTING SCHOOL POLICIES

Is there an anti-bully policy in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

If you've answered Yes to the above question, please state below whether or not you feel that these policies are effective in reducing or alleviating pupil conflict, and the extent to which you feel they are effective. Otherwise, please skip to the next question.

_____
_____
_____
_____

As a teacher, do you feel that you have ample input into the creation and/or administration of anti-bullying policies?

1. Yes
2. No

If you've answered No to the above question, please mention below what you would add or change about the anti-bullying policies applied at your school.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do parents have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Do pupils have a say in the anti-bullying policies in your school?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

Do you think the staff at your school are doing enough to reduce or stop pupil conflicts?

1. Yes
2. No
3 Not sure

PART 5 SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

Please Indicate:

Gender: Male___Female ___

Age: 20-29 ____ 30-39 ____ 40-49 ____ 50-59 ____ 60+ ____

Subject (s) you teach _____

THE END. THANK YOU!!!

Appendix 6 - Sample pupil interview (transcribed)

Edward Elgar School - pupil interview

Interviewer: Can you tell me what conflict means to you?

Pupil: An argument between two people or more than two people it could be a group…also it could be not talking to each other, that tension between people.

Interviewer: Do you see that kind of conflict here at school?

Pupil: We see it loads of times but we see it like different scales, like you see violent conflict, like if two friends have just split and they were best friends then you immediately see like two whole classes not really getting along.

Interviewer: Is it usually between males and females?

Pupil: Major conflicts are between males mostly and then minor conflicts will probably be females.

Interviewer: Why do you consider that to be conflict?

Pupil: Because you can't then really concentrate on what you are supposed to do…you can't really concentrate on your work and stuff.

Interviewer: Can you name some common types of pupil conflicts that happen here?

Pupil: Conflict between best friends, say someone didn't do something for them and then they will have conflict between that, and there also conflict like if someone called someone names.

Interviewer: And where do these conflicts usually take place?

Pupil: In the classrooms, mostly and in the playgrounds most people stay put of each-others way if they know they are in trouble.

Interviewer: Do you think that teachers know that these conflicts happen in the classroom?

Pupils: It depends.

Interviewer: If you had a problem at school who would you talk to about it?

Pupil: I wouldn't really talk to anyone, probably my friend. I wouldn't do anything about it because in probably a day or so it would pass over. It doesn't stay that long.

Interviewer: Does it pass over by people leaving each other alone?

Pupil: Yeah, by people leaving each other alone or cause you won't see them for a while.

Interviewer: Can you name some conflicts that you have experienced here?

Pupil: There was a break up between friends. Me and this friend didn't really get on after a while, cause they thought I was trying to be friends with someone else. Then we went and talked about it and came to an agreement that I would spend this much time with one friend and another time with another friend, but now it's all all-right.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced or seen Happy Slapping?

Pupil: Yeah I've seen and some people do at me but not really that much because of my size so they don't really.

Interviewer: Can you explain what it is?

Pupil: You come up on someone from the back and slap them, but it could be anyone, it's more about if you do it to strangers that you don't know. Like anyone on the street or something. Like if you see a couple of friends doing it then it's not really that bad, you know that nothing is going to happen after it.

Interviewer: Have you experienced self-induced vomiting?

Pupil: (Laughs), no.

Interviewer: Can you tell me if there is an 'emo' culture here?

Pupil: There has been since about year nine, but then like you get to be friends of them…cause like most of my friends, some of them are emo's and some are not, but then we all just blend together and then we joke around…they say that most emo's self-harm so we just probably make a joke about it but then the person, the emo knows that we are joking so it doesn't go into a fight or nothing or no one gets upset or nothing. We're just having fun with each other.

Interviewer: Can you explain what they stand for, what they are?

Pupil: They are different, they probably won't listen to the same music as you, probably won't watch the same shows as you but then if you talk to them they can be fun as well. They don't really look that different. They look maybe like a little bit different but it's not that major difference, so you can still be friends with them.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you if joke with them and say that they self-harm, they laugh, why would that be an issue?

Pupil: If you say it then you just laugh about it cause it will be funny if you say it with your friends cause you can't say it so someone that you don't know, you can only joke around with your friends.

Interviewer: Is that a part of the emo culture, is that why you laugh about it?

Pupil: no it's mostly because they are different. Cause I've got big feet they'll say you got big feet and they'll probably say you've got big feet and they I'll be like that's cool and then you just probably cut yourself then, just having a little bit of fun.

Interviewer: What I am trying to get at is you say you probably cut yourself, joking. Is that what they are stereotyped to do, is that why you are joking about it?

Pupil: Yeah.

Interviewer: Have you ever-self-harmed?

Pupil: No.

Interviewer: Have you seen or known of anyone who has?

Pupil: No, not really.

Interviewer: Can you explain what self-harming is?

Pupil: Probably like trying to hurt yourself, in ways to take away the pain … like focus the pain in one part.

Interviewer: Hurt yourself how?

Pupil: Probably with a knife.

Interviewer: How do you respond personally when you have a conflict at school?

Pupil: I don't really respond to it. It just goes away. If you think about it too much then it gets into an issue. Unless the other person want to take it further, if the

other person wants to take it further then you probably need to go to a teacher then, that's what I do.

Interviewer: Where do you think you have learned to respond this way?

Pupil: My parents mostly. They've taught me to store my anger, if you get angry at someone yeah then just leave it and it will just go away.

Interviewer: And do you feel that's the case?

Pupil: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, what do you do if it doesn't go away?

Pupil: If it doesn't go away, then probably I'd have to tell a teacher, but if it doesn't go away then you will have a group of people and the teachers will instantly know that something is wrong.

Interviewer: Does your school have any policies to deal with conflict?

Pupil: Yeah, they have like a non-bully policy, they also have stuff like if you carry a knife or if you want to hurt someone then you will probably get permanently excluded, and you will get in trouble like exclusions, and detentions, and home rooms and stuff.

Interviewer: How did you learn about these policies?

Pupil: Mostly in assembly they are like if you do this then this will be the consequence so you just kind of stay away from them.

Interviewer: Do you feel that these policies are helpful in reducing pupil conflict?

Pupil: Yeah, but then if you think about it some of the sanctions are not that harsh to stop people from doing it.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Pupil: If someone has said that if you beat this person up the only thing you will get is detention then you probably won't really think about it that much, cause it's only a detention and then you will probably will do it. If the sanctions are really harsh like if you beat someone up then you will probably get permanently excluded, that will stop a lot of people from doing it.

Interviewer: You mentioned assembly, what are they?

Pupil: Once a week we have one, and we sit in a hall and the teachers give us announcements and for the whole year group and then talk about things coming up like holidays and anything interesting like that.

Interviewer: And that's where they introduced the policy?

Pupil: Yeah, say if someone has a fight then they will just make it very clear that that person's gonna get this type of … without mentioning any names.

Interviewer: You mentioned the anti-bullying policy, what would bullying mean to you then?

Pupil: I think bullying is mostly like if you pick on someone less than you but they are not your friends or you don't know them so it could be you're in year eleven and you could pick on a kid that is in year seven that you've never met before. If you do it with a friend and they do it back then it is all right cause then you know the limit and you are not taking it that seriously.

Interviewer: Would you consider bullying to be a conflict?

Pupil: Yeah, if it's what I just said about year sevens, then definitely yeah.

Interviewer: But is it the main kind of conflict here?

Pupil: **No, not the main, but it is a big conflict here.**

Interviewer: **What's the most serious kind of conflict?**

Pupil: **Say if someone plays football and then another person tries to take the ball or something and many people don't know that someone's taken their balls then then they'll probably try to beat them in front of their friends but then it could end up in serious consequences afterwards.**

Interviewer: **Do you feel that you have a say in the anti-bullying policies?**

Pupil: **It's not really a say but then you know what to do to stay out of it … In the policy itself I don't think you really have a say on what's right and what's wrong.**

Interviewer: **Do the staff ask you for your input in the anti-bullying policy?**

Pupil: **No.**

Interviewer: **Would you like them to if you had the opportunity?**

Pupil: **Not really cause then you could put anything in there but if it's designed by the staff then you know that it's gonna be good for you, like it's gonna be good for the school. But like if someone's got caught bullying then probably they could take their views and stuff cause sometimes you don't always get the views on both sides.**

Interviewer: **Do you feel that the teachers understand and share the same ideas of conflict that the pupils do?**

Pupil: **It depends … Some teachers do, like the younger members of staff have a good idea of what conflict is and stuff but then like the older members not really because they are mostly focused on, their conflicts are like mostly bullying and stuff like that. Whilst if a younger teacher had name-calling in the class-room it won't be that bad cause of everyone's friends in the classroom, but then if it was someone like name-calling in the playground then probably yeah the teachers would recognize that as something bad.**

Appendix 7 - Permission Letter (part 1)

25.02.2009

Dear Parent/Carer,

At present we have a PhD student from Warwick University in school doing research for her PhD. A tutor group has been randomly selected from each year group to complete a questionnaire and a few pupils representing year groups 7-11 have been randomly selected for a one-to-one discussion to follow-up the questionnaire with qualitative data.

The topic for her report/thesis involves the views of young people on conflict, conflict resolution and school management of conflict.

Please be re-assured that her PhD course professor has confirmed that the methodology requires the school and all students remain anonymous in her report/thesis. In fact, none of the completed questionnaires and/or interviews will be seen by the school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

(name and title of staff who helped me).

……

Student name:

I give permission for my son/daughter _____ to participate in the PhD research interview.

Parent/Carer

_____ (please sign here and return form to school)

Permission Letter (part 2)

Your interview/discussion will be on:

Monday 09.03.2009 at 1.40 PM

Please show this note to your classroom teacher and then come straight to the_____ office.